

TAUNTON'S

Grilling Guide Inside

SEPTEMBER 2000 NO. 40

# fine COOKING

F O R P E O P L E W H O L O V E T O C O O K

**Summer vegetables star in a casual dinner menu**

**How to cook fruit on the grill**

**Three vibrant gazpachos**

**Bright flavors for bean salads**

**Ice cream with perfect texture**

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Science and art come together in a bowl of ice cream. Turn to p. 78 for the science of perfect texture and p. 52 for a trio of fabulous flavors.

# fine COOKING®

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2000 ISSUE 40



**56** Bill Briwa brings out the best in fruit by browning it on the grill, for both sweet and savory dishes.

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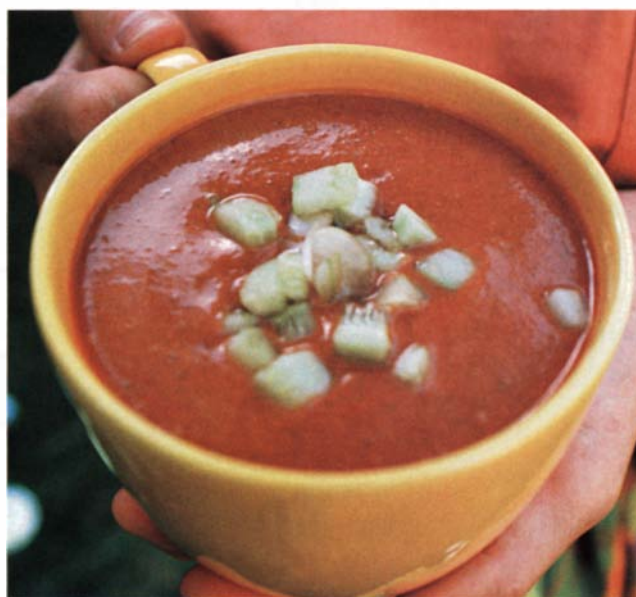
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Whether sweet or savory, a galette is less fussy than a traditional tart and offers more crisp crust

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Cover photo, Martha Holmberg.

These pages: clockwise from top left, Scott Phillips; Martha Holmberg; Sarah Jay; Judi Rutz.



**48** Gazpacho makes an invigorating and refreshing summer meal—try Leslie Revsin's three versions.





It's **John Ash's** personal mission to encourage cooks to use their local products. A California food and wine guru ("Farmers' Market Menu," p. 36), the author of the award-winning *From the*

*Earth to the Table*, and the director of food and wine education for Fetzer Vineyards, John travels the world, spreading his message. He frequently teaches at the Culinary Institute of America, at the Disney Institute, on Crystal Cruises, and at events like Taste of the Nation, where he shares his vast food knowledge and love of fresh ingredients with amateur and professional cooks alike. When he's not cooking or teaching, John is writing (this is his fourth article for *Fine Cooking*) or working on two new cookbooks—one that will cover the techniques he teaches in his classes, and one that (in his own words) will be "a bit more philosophical," with a chance for him to "yak" about his favorite food issues, such as sustainable agriculture and the spiritual and sensual connections we have with food.

After four years of cooking in New York City restaurants, **Jan Newberry** ("Bean Salads," p. 42), decided to combine her passion for cooking with her love for words. Since that time, she has written about food for a wide range of publications, including *Fine Cooking*, where she was the managing editor for three years. Today, Jan lives in Oakland, California, where she continues to eat and write for a living as the food editor of *San Francisco* magazine.



**Lisa Hanauer** ("Grilled Corn," p. 46) is a former chef-restaurateur (recovering nicely, thank you), who is now a food writer and a preschool teacher. Prior to owning her own

restaurant in the mid '90s (Café Chêneville in Oakland, California), Lisa worked at Oliveto and Square One; she has also catered and taught cooking classes. She lives in Oakland.



**Leslie Revsin** ("Gazpacho," p. 48) was the first woman chef at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and chef-owner of Restaurant Leslie. She was the executive chef in notable professional kitchens and was featured on the PBS series *New York Master Chefs*. Leslie's book, *Great Fish, Quick* (Double-day), was a Julia Child Award finalist for first book. She's at work on her second book.



**Jim Peyton** ("Ice Cream," p. 52) is the author of three books: *El Norte: The Cuisine of Northern Mexico*; *La Cocina de la Frontera: Mexican-American Cooking from the Southwest*; and *Jim Peyton's New Cooking from Old Mexico* (all from Red Crane Books). Jim lives in San Antonio, Texas, but spends time in his hometown of La Jolla, California, and in Mexico, where he continues his search for recipes. In addition to giving classes, he teaches Mexican cuisine on his web site, [www.lomexicano.com](http://www.lomexicano.com).

When **Bill Briwa** ("Grilled Fruit," p. 56) graduated from The Culinary Institute of



America in Hyde Park in 1980, he was voted most likely to succeed. After working at the French Laundry and Domaine Chandon, owning his own restaurant in

northern California, and teaching at Napa Valley Community College, where he helped develop the curriculum for the Culinary Arts Certificate Program, Bill is back at the CIA. Since 1996, he's been a chef-instructor at the school's Greystone campus in St. Helena, California. He's also a member of the Bread Bakers Guild of America.

**Ed Starbird** ("Smoked Salmon," p. 61) opened Sea Smoke ([www.seasmoke.net](http://www.seasmoke.net)), his smoked salmon business in Urbanna, Virginia, after he retired from The Taunton Press (which publishes *Fine Cooking*) where he worked for 12 years as manager prepress. He began smoking fish as a weekend pastime. Today he sells his superb smoked salmon to specialty food shops, restaurants, caterers, and through a specialty food catalog (see Sources, p. 80).

**Joanne Smart** ("Smokers," p. 66), is an associate editor for *Fine Cooking* who is excited—perhaps excessively—about her newfound ability to smoke salmon (but she'll keep her day job for now).

**David Lebovitz** ("Gallettes," p. 68) received most of his training at Alice Waters's legendary Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California. For a dozen years, he created desserts for the seasonal menus. He then became the pastry chef at Bruce Cost's critically acclaimed restaurant, Monsoon. David just published his first cookbook, *Room for Dessert* (HarperCollins), and is working on *The Collective Wisdom of the Baker's Dozen* with Marion Cunningham, Flo Braker, Alice Medrich, Kathleen Stewart, and others. His web site, [www.davidlebovitz.com](http://www.davidlebovitz.com), includes recipes, questions, and answers.





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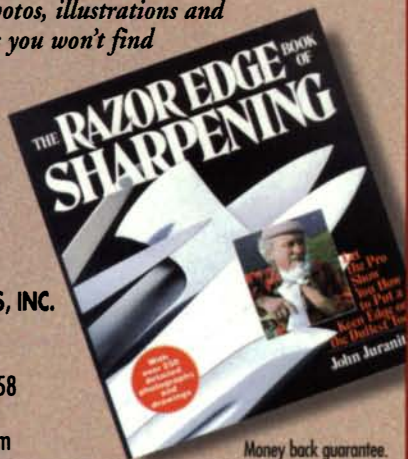
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Here's the place to share your thoughts on our recent articles or your food and cooking philosophies. Send your comments to *Letters, Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by e-mail to [fc@taunton.com](mailto:fc@taunton.com).

## We're looking for a few good kitchens

Actually, we're just looking for parts of kitchens, the features—large or small—that you like most about your kitchen and that help make cooking more fun and efficient.

We're thinking of starting a column in the magazine that highlights this kind of neat kitchen detail, in both our readers' and our authors' homes, and from time to time even in professional kitchens.

But we're not just interested in stuff that looks great, e.g., beautiful granite countertops. We want design features that function, ingenious solutions to problems like where to store pot lids or paper bags, ways to hang utensils for easy reach, systems for organizing your pantry—whatever part of your kitchen makes you say "I'm so glad I've got this."

If you've got a feature that you think we'd like to know about, send us a description

and a photo. Don't worry about the quality of the photo—if we think we'll use your kitchen in the magazine, we'll find a way to get print-quality photographs taken. Send your ideas by mail (sorry, we won't be able to send them back), by fax, or by e-mail, and mark them "Attention: Kitchen Detail," *Fine Cooking*, 63 S. Main St., Newtown, CT 06470; fax: 203/426-3434; [fc@taunton.com](mailto:fc@taunton.com).

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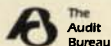
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# LETTERS

## Ahem, that's *our* name, thank you

As the world's largest shipper of fresh broccoli, all of us at Mann Packing were thrilled to read Janet Fletcher's article, "Broccoli Boldly Seasoned," in FC#37 (p. 33).

I'd like to clarify one point. In a sidebar, you listed a new broccoli hybrid under the descriptor *broccolini* and noted that this new vegetable is marketed under the name *aspiration*. Actually, the generic name of the hybrid is Baby Broccoli, which has a product look-up number of 3277 from the Produce Electronic Identification Board. Broccolini is a trademark of Mann Packing Co.; Aspiration is a trademark of Sakata Seed America, the company that did research to develop the hybrid.

—*Lorri A. Koster,*  
Director of Marketing  
Communication,  
Mann Packing Co., Inc.,  
Salinas, California

## Treasure hunting on the Web

I read Sarah Jay's piece in Tasted & Tested (FC#38, p. 28) about finding out-of-print cookbooks on the Net. You might also want to take a look at [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com). Powell's is a very large new and used book store in Portland, Oregon; it also has a Books for Cooks store. You

can search its entire book inventory via its site. I was very pleased to find an old cookbook that my grandmother had given my mother (I wanted my own copy). Good luck to Sarah in her hunt for the entire *Good Cook* series.

—*Robin Coon, via e-mail*

## Barbecued chicken, quick

I enjoyed your article on barbecuing chicken (FC#39,

p. 37), but I don't often have the time to cook the chicken for the 2½ to 3 hours prior to "saucing."

My solution is to rub spices on the chicken (my favorite is Ozark Fried Chicken Seasoning from the The Spice House in Milwaukee, Wisconsin) and then microwave the chicken, on a microwave bacon rack covered with waxed paper, until the chicken is about three-

quarters done, 8 to 10 minutes, turning once. I find this cooks the inside of the chicken and allows me to finish the outside on the grill.

I then put the chicken on the grill—charcoal of course—and finish the cooking, with the barbecue sauce added during the last few minutes.

An interesting alternative to the barbecue sauce is to squeeze fresh lemon juice over the chicken just before removing it from the grill.

I enjoy your magazine and hope my tip will allow your readers to enjoy my "fast-food" version of barbecued chicken.

—*Bob Schroer, via e-mail*

## Just a spritz for no-stick pasta

While I agree with Shirley Corriher that pasta cooked in oily water rejects sauces (FC#39, p. 82), I'd like to offer an alternative (to pouring oil in water) that keeps pasta from sticking without "greasing the pasta." I lightly spritz oil from a spray can (or atomizer) over the top of the water (a second or less—just enough to be visible on the water's surface). This floats on the surface and then lightly coats each piece of pasta as it passes through the film, without creating so thick a layer of oil that it causes a problem later.

—*Liz England-Kennedy,*  
via e-mail ♦

## *fine* COOKING ...around the country

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**July 9–11:** *Fine Cooking* has a booth at the Fancy Food Show in New York City. Info: 708/786-4120; [www.fancyfoodshows.com](http://www.fancyfoodshows.com).

**July 11–13:** Contributing editor Molly Stevens teaches classes at Sur la Table, Dallas and Houston stores. Info: 214/219-4404 (Dallas); 713/533-0400 (Houston).

**August 28–29:** Editor Martha Holmberg and managing editor Susie Middleton teach cooking classes at King's Supermarkets (Short Hills, Verona, and Hillsdale, New Jersey, stores). Info: 973/463-6500.

**September 8–10:** *Fine Cooking* sponsors a Whisk Away Weekend with the New England Culinary Institute, at The Inn at Essex, Essex Junction, Vermont. Martha Holmberg, Susie Middleton, contributing editor Molly Stevens, and frequent contributor Leslie Revsin teach cooking classes. Info: contact Debbie Tegen at 802/764-1490 or [debbiet@neci.edu](mailto:debbiet@neci.edu).

**Plus:** Jennifer Bushman demonstrates recipes from the pages of *Fine Cooking* on her "Nothing to It" television segments, airing on selected NBC and Fox stations in Nevada, Arizona, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

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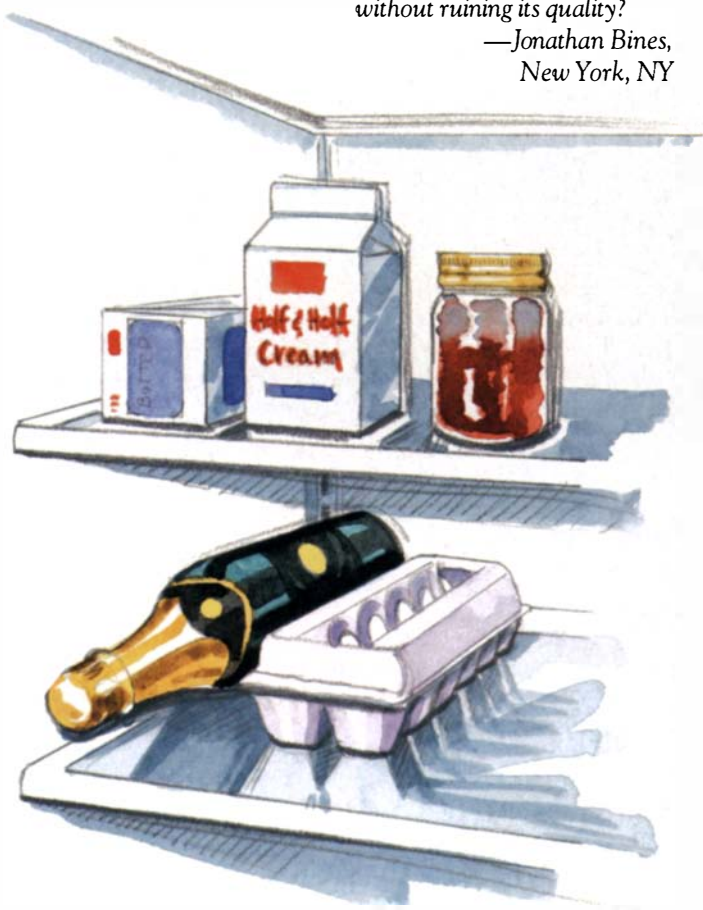
Have a question of general interest about cooking?

Send it to Q&A, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

### The best way to store chilled Champagne

*How should I store a bottle of Champagne (or white wine) that I've chilled but not yet opened? Should it remain chilled until I have occasion to drink it, or can it be brought back to room temperature without ruining its quality?*

—Jonathan Bines,  
New York, NY



Keep chilled Champagne on an inside shelf of the refrigerator—not on the door—to minimize temperature fluctuations.

**Tim Gaiser replies:** My rule is this: the better the wine, the less you want to meddle with storing temperatures. Bringing Champagne or white wine to room temperature after it's already been chilled will dull the flavors a bit, so it's not the best solution. Nevertheless, if the bottle in question is an inexpensive sparkling wine, you're not expecting tremendous complexity or nuance, so you can certainly remove it

from the refrigerator and store it properly until needed (for any wine, proper storage means a dark place with a consistent, cool temperature, 55° to 60°F).

Fine Champagne is all about delicacy of flavor, however, and it's especially sensitive to temperature changes. So if you have a chilled bottle of Dom Perignon on your hands, you're better off keeping it chilled until the next opportunity to drink it—just make sure that celebratory moment occurs within the next two to three weeks.

The main concern with refrigerator storage is that the temperature can fluctuate if the door is opened often; to minimize the effect on the wine, keep the bottle on an inside shelf, not in the door. Regardless of the quality of the sparkling wine, long-term storage in the refrigerator isn't a good option. After a couple of months, the cold, dry air can shrink the cork and leave you with a flat, oxidized wine. *Tim Gaiser, a master sommelier, is a senior wine merchant at wine.com.*

### Removing mold from hard cheeses

*In a past issue, a cheesemaker said that rubbing salt on a moldy section of hard cheese removes the mold. How safe is it to eat such a piece of cheese, considering that some mold spores might be below the surface?*

—David Shane,  
Tempe, AZ

**Dr. Lloyd Bullerman replies:** Rubbing salt on a moldy section of a hard cheese removes visible mold growth by abrasion, and it

probably dehydrates and kills the surface mold, too. But since some of the mold filaments may have slightly penetrated the cheese, especially if there are cracks or crevices, the Food & Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture both recommend trimming off the moldy parts. They suggest removing about ½ inch of a hard cheese around and beneath the mold colony. This would also remove any toxic metabolites (called mycotoxins) that may have been produced by the mold and slightly diffused into the cheese.

Molds are a type of fungus (and are unrelated to bacteria, such as *Listeria* or *Salmonella*, which have been found on some soft cheeses and which cannot be seen or smelled). Most molds that grow on cheese kept in the refrigerator are certain species of *Penicillium*; often they're simply wild types of *Penicillium roquefortii*, which is the blue mold used to produce blue-veined cheeses such as Roquefort and Gorgonzola.

While no one can guarantee that every mold that develops on cheese is harmless, studies have shown that the mycotoxins that form on cheese stored under adequate refrigeration (38°F or lower) aren't highly toxic. Thus, while rubbing a hard cheese with salt to remove mold growth may not do as thorough a job as trimming, it probably isn't dangerous in most situations, either.

Faced with a piece of moldy cheese, use what we call a risk-benefit assessment in deciding how to deal with it. If it has been kept very cold, and if the moldy part is

small relative to what remains, the mold probably can be safely trimmed. If, on the other hand, the cheese hasn't been kept cold, or is overrun with mold, it's probably best to simply discard it.

*Dr. Lloyd Bullerman, professor of food microbiology and mycology, has been studying molds at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for the last thirty years.*

### Freezing buttermilk

*I don't use buttermilk often enough to finish the carton before it expires. Can it be frozen?*

—Anita Hansell,  
Westport, CT

**Sarah Jay replies:** When buttermilk is frozen and then

defrosted, it loses some of the creaminess it had when fresh, and it separates slightly. For that reason, the National Dairy Council doesn't recommend freezing it. The change in texture would probably be noticeable in certain sauces, such as a ranch salad dressing, and in dishes where the buttermilk's texture is all-important, such as a buttermilk pie. But for many baked goods, frozen buttermilk is fine (powdered buttermilk is another option). When I made my favorite scones using both frozen and fresh buttermilk, I couldn't detect any real difference, but pancakes made with the former weren't as light and airy as those made with the latter.



**Freeze buttermilk in small portions; it defrosts quickly for use in scones and other baked goods.**

Buttermilk will keep frozen for two months, but the longer it's frozen, the more it will deteriorate in quality. Before freezing, shake the carton vigorously. Then freeze it in small portions (½ cup or 1 cup) in zip-top bags; these

sizes defrost quickly and are practical quantities for most recipes. Defrost buttermilk in the refrigerator and use it within the next day; if there's any left over, discard it.

*Sarah Jay is an associate editor for Fine Cooking.* ♦

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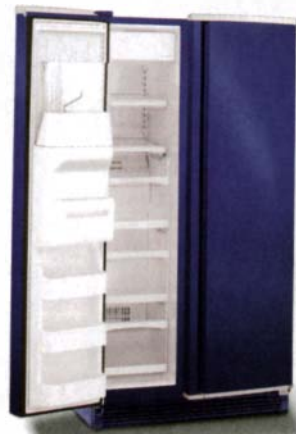
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## A newly available apéritif

A delicious peach apéritif from the south of France is now available here. Rinquinquin (that's ran-kan-KAN with a nasal twang—much easier to say after a few sips, by the way) is French for “little treat” or “pick-me-up.” Which says it exactly, because sipping Rinquinquin is pure refreshment: heady peach aromas trailed by citrusy-peach flavors and a delightfully dry finish. Serve it chilled—straight up, on the rocks, or cut with soda. Rinquinquin is great along with olives, salted nuts, and savory crackers. Or try it in cooking: stir a tablespoon or two into a pan sauce, or splash it over fruit salad or vanilla ice cream. A bottle is about \$14; check your local wine store, visit [www.crillonimporters.com](http://www.crillonimporters.com), or call Crillon (201/368-8878) for more information on where to buy.

—Amy Albert, associate editor

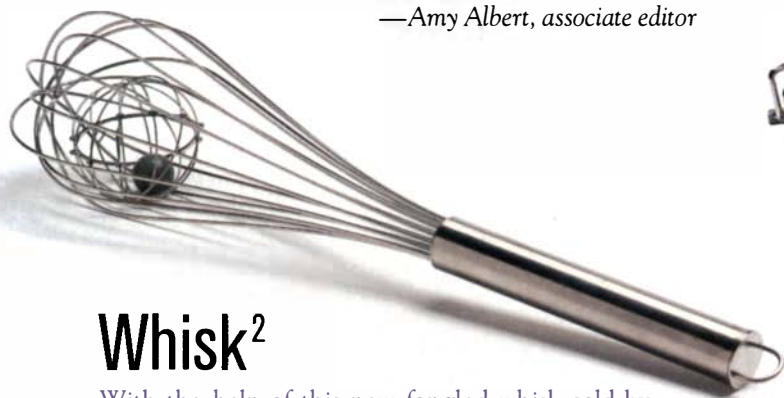


## Web sites for summer splurging

If you want to indulge in the ultimate barbecue this summer, treat yourself to prime aged beef—something you won't find in the grocery store. Now the famous prime beef from Lobel's, the Manhattan butcher shop, is available by mail from [www.ultimategrill.com](http://www.ultimategrill.com) (the Frontgate catalog, with the glamorous grills, online; type *Lobel's* in the site's search box). Four prime 10-ounce boneless strip steaks are \$79.50; filets, veal chops, and variety packs are also available.

If it's a real New England clambake you're after, and you want the raw goods delivered to you in one package, order the DownEast Feast for two, four, six, or eight from [www.maine lobster.com](http://www.maine lobster.com). Medium lobsters, shellfish (mussels or steamers), seafood or clam chowder, vegetables (potatoes, corn) and shell crackers come packed in a reusable enameled lobster pot. The package for two is \$89.95, including shipping by FedEx from Portland, Maine. If you just want the lobsters, they're available in many sizes at market prices.

—Susie Middleton, managing editor



## Whisk<sup>2</sup>

With the help of this new-fangled whisk sold by Williams-Sonoma, I've been making the most perfectly emulsified vinaigrettes. I know it looks more like a cat toy than a kitchen implement, but I can whip up a dressing with this whisk using half the effort of a traditional whisk—and I end up with even better results. The innovative, whisk-within-a-whisk design creates more action with the same amount of wrist strokes. A word of caution: dry this whisk with care. After rinsing traditional whisks, I like to rap them against my apron or a towel to shake of any excess water. When I rapped this one, the little ball went flying across the room (the good news is that the ball comes out for easier cleaning). Call 800/541-2233 or log on to [www.williams-sonoma.com](http://www.williams-sonoma.com).

—Abigail Johnson Dodge,  
test kitchen director



## Crisp pink olives for snacking or cooking

Turkish olives are hard to find, but now one family business, the Olive Farm, is bringing a light, crisp olive to American tables directly from the southwest coast of Turkey. These

firm, pink olives are perfect for summer salads, hors d'oeuvres, and even tapenade, as they have a refreshing

feel—not oily or heavy. They arrive brined in a 25-ounce plastic jar (\$15) with a snap lid, and they'll last all summer in the refrigerator. Or you can order them as a package (\$33) with a liter of the Olive Farm's unique Turkish-style, light, fruity, golden extra-virgin olive oil (perfect for salad dressings) from [www.olivefarm.com](http://www.olivefarm.com). The Olive Farm also offers a delicious “Early Harvest” extra-virgin olive oil, which will appeal to people who like a greener, Tuscan-style olive oil (call for prices). To order, call 888/380-8018. —Susie Middleton



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## New seafood and duck stocks from More than Gourmet

Two of the newest additions to the impressive repertoire of stock reductions from More than Gourmet (makers of Demi-Glace Gold) are Glace de Canard Gold (duck stock reduction) and Glace de Fruits de Mer Gold (fish and shellfish stock reduction). Both live up to the company's reputation for producing first-quality stock concentrates that are convenient pantry staples for the home cook. Like their other products, these two new reductions are made with natural, whole ingredients—the same that you or a restaurant chef would use to make stock from scratch—and without the numbing amounts of sodium, preservatives, or fillers used in other commercially available stock concentrates.

With one whiff of the seafood reduction, I was transported back to my days as an apprentice in Paris, where it was my job to kneel in front of a huge mortar and pestle and pound lobster bodies to extract all the flavorful juices. The chef then made exquisite sauces, bisques,

and seafood stews with the fruits of my labor, while I cleaned fragments of shells from the walls, from the floor, and from behind my ears. Now, with one little spoonful of Glace de Fruits de Mer, I get that same rich, sweet, distinct shellfish flavor without all the hassle. My favorite use for the seafood reduction is to simply whisk a bit into some heavy cream and reduce it to make a sublime sauce for delicate fish, pasta, or shellfish. When reconstituted, the stock has the unmistakable reddish, somewhat cloudy, almost gritty character of a true homemade shellfish stock. It's a wonderful base for delicious seafood stews and soups.

Absent from the Glace de Canard is the strong, musky flavor sometimes associated with duck stock. Instead, this version is appealingly light and round in flavor with sweet hints of tomato and bell pepper. Its savory, complex character and lovely, lip-smacking viscosity



make it a great secret weapon for doctoring simple pan sauces or gravies for roasted poultry, red meats, pork and, of course, duck or other fowl.

The two reductions are available in 1.5-ounce plastic puck-shaped cups (that reconstitute to four cups of stock), or in 16-ounce tubs with resealable lids. The Glace de Fruits de Mer Gold is pricey—\$7.94 for 1.5 ounces, \$58.50 for 16 ounces—but considering how far a little of this goes compared to how much you'd spend to make your own, it's worth it. The Glace de Canard Gold is \$6.50 for 1.5 ounces and \$45.50 for 16 ounces. Call More than Gourmet at 800/860-9385 or visit [www.morethangourmet.com](http://www.morethangourmet.com) for more information on the whole line of products.

—Molly Stevens, contributing editor

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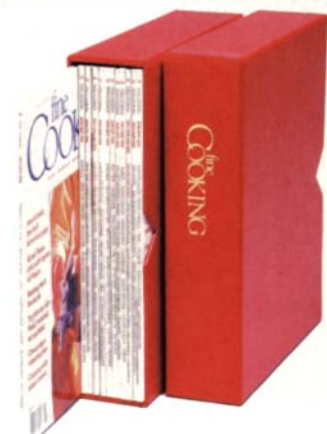
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# A concassée makes tomatoes recipe-ready

**Y**ou may have made a tomato concassée without realizing it. A term that's bandied about in cooking schools and some professional kitchens, tomato concassée is essentially shorthand for the line in a recipe that says "tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped."

But even if you don't use the word concassée—it's pronounced kohn-kah-SAY and literally means "broken apart"—it's helpful to know the best way to prepare this useful ingredient.

Use tomato concassée raw, or cook it for a more intense flavor. Raw concassée is the main ingredient for Mexican salsa. Seasoned with lemon juice or vinegar and flavored with basil, it makes a great topping for bruschetta or grilled chicken or fish. I also like to add it at the last minute to sauces for extra body, texture, and acidity.

Cooking tomato concassée concentrates the tomato's juices and intensifies the flavor. Instructions for cooking tomato concassée often say to cook the chopped tomatoes until their liquid has evaporated, but this turns the tomato flesh to mush. Instead, I've developed a technique, shown on p. 22, that gives me the same concentrated flavor yet preserves much of the texture and freshness of the tomato flesh.

If my tomatoes are truly fabulous, I simply add a little salt and pepper, and at times

some extra-virgin olive oil and chopped basil, to the cooked concassée before tossing it with pasta. If your tomatoes are less than perfect, give them a flavor boost by sweating some onions and garlic in olive oil before adding the raw tomatoes to the pan.

If you have an abundance of tomatoes, you can make a lot of this basic fresh tomato sauce and freeze it.

Here are some tips for making the best tomato concassée:

Use the most flavorful tomatoes you can find. Because a concassée is all about the tomatoes, the tomatoes need to be bursting with flavor. Out of season, plum tomatoes—which have a nice, meaty texture—are your best bet. But when tomatoes are in season, just look for whatever's best. Choose tomatoes that feel heavy for

**Blanch tomatoes to loosen their skins for easy peeling**



**Plunge the tomatoes into boiling water and then shock them in cold.** Boil ripe tomatoes for 15 seconds; underripe for 30.



**Core the tomatoes after blanching.** The hole left by the stem will give you a place to start peeling the skin. Peel off the skin with your fingers, or by pinching it between your thumb and a paring knife and pulling it off in strips.

**Seed and chop to the consistency you like**



**Cut the tomatoes in half crosswise and squeeze out the seeds.** Don't squash the tomato; if the seeds are stubborn, use your fingers to pull them out.



**Slice and then chop the tomatoes to the size you want.** You've now got raw tomato concassée—great for bruschetta.



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## Cook the juices separately to intensify flavor



**Bring the tomatoes to a simmer in a wide pan**, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until they release most of their liquid but haven't lost their shape, about 5 minutes. Strain the juices into a saucepan, reserving the flesh.



**Boil the juices until concentrated in color and flavor** and reduced by two-thirds. Recombine the juices with the tomato flesh.

their size, and, ideally, smell like a tomato, feel slightly sticky, and have part of the stem still attached. They don't have to be red; orange and yellow tomatoes make a slightly sweeter concassée with a pretty hue.

**Blanch tomatoes for easy peeling.** Peeling tomatoes isn't something I bother with unless absolutely necessary. For concassée—especially cooked concassée—it is. If you leave the skin on, it ends up as little curls floating in the sauce. Peeling also improves the texture of less than perfect tomatoes.

Blanching tomatoes—submerging them briefly in boiling water and then shocking them with cold water—loosens their skins and makes them much easier to peel. To keep tomatoes from getting water-

logged, I don't core them until after blanching. For the same reason, I don't bother to score the bottom of the tomato, as you see in some recipes.

If I'm blanching just a couple of tomatoes, I simply run them under cold water after scooping them out of the boiling water. But a large bowl of ice water near the boiling water is handy for cooling a few tomatoes quickly at one time. If I'm blanching many tomatoes, I do them in batches—so they're only in the hot water for 15 seconds—or some may boil for too long while I'm retrieving others.

*James Peterson, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, has written many cookbooks, including Vegetables (William Morrow) and Essentials of Cooking (Artisan). ♦*

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# Olives, to savor and to cook with

It's only in the last decade that Americans have begun to appreciate olives. Gone are the days when we thought of them as green and stuffed with tired pimento slivers, as a lonely martini garnish, or as the soft, tasteless, canned black condiment most of us grew up eating (or avoiding). With so many more delicious choices now available here, olives are gaining recognition as a valuable and important food—the status they've held for thousands of years all over the Mediterranean basin.

## Olive trees need hot, arid weather

Olive trees have been a cultivated crop for more than 6,000 years. Their birthplace, the Mediterranean, remains home to more than 90% of the world's production.

Olives thrive only in hot, dry climates with mild winters. The trees take 12 to 15 years to bear full crops, and they can live up to 600 years. At specialty markets, you'll find table olives from Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Israel, and Morocco. There are newer entries, too, from olive groves in California.

Olives are actually fruits. Like cherries, peaches, and other stone fruits, olives are botanically classified as drupes, distinguished by fleshy pulp, a single seed or pit, and an inner stone that contains the seed.

All olives ripen from green to black, through intermedi-

ate stages of reddish, brown, and purple. Green and black olives aren't necessarily different varieties; they're harvested and cured for the table at all stages of ripeness.

Olives are inedible straight from the tree. Because of their bitter component, *oleurpein*, olives must be cured before eating.

## Brining or dry-curing makes olives delicious

While factors such as ripeness, climate, and handling all play a part, the flavor of finished olives relies mostly on the curing method. Curing not only reduces the olive fruits' inherent bitterness, it also brings out rich olive flavors. Curing is done in one of

two ways: either by brining or by dry-curing.

Brining may involve a brief soaking in an alkali solution, and then washing and fermentation in brine for as long as six months. Or if bitterness and acidity are low, it may simply involve repeated brine fermentation.

Many cured olives are then finished in vinegar, wine, or oil. Garlic, herbs, spices, chiles, or citrus peel are often

**Kalamatas** (or **calamatas**) are Greek olives named for their geographic region of production; they're great for eating and for cooking. Medium-size with thick flesh, kalamatas have a wonderfully intense but not overly strong flavor. Picked ripe, kalamatas are slit, brine-cured, and then packed in vinegar. Easy to pit, they're delicious in Greek salads with feta cheese, fresh tomatoes, and cucumbers.

**Picholine olives** are brine-cured French olives with crunchy flesh and a salty-sweet flavor; they're delicious with before-dinner drinks. In the U.S., picholines are sometimes packed with citric acid to preserve their color.

**Niçoise olives** are a French favorite, produced in the region around the French Riviera. They have a sharp, somewhat sour taste and often come packed with herbs. A classic component of *salade niçoise*, pitted, minced niçoise olives make a fine, full-flavored tapenade spread, too.

**Lucques** are French table olives with an elegant oval shape and tender flesh. Lucques are mild and buttery; they're particularly good served with *apéritifs* and a dish of salted nuts.

True **Sicilian olives** are large, brownish-green brine-cured olives with soft-textured and somewhat tart but mild flesh. In the U.S., "Sicilian-style" olives are produced in California and are often offered cracked or occasionally packed with chile peppers and olive oil added to their finished brine.



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READER SERVICE NO. 79



**Dry-cured olives** (also called **oil-cured** or **salt-cured**), are mostly produced in Greece and northern Africa, especially Morocco. They have a meaty texture and a slightly bitter, smoky flavor that lingers on the tongue. Oil-cured olives are easy to pit because of their moist, pliable flesh. Greek oil-cured olives tend to be milder, while French oil-cured olives have an almost whiskey-like flavor.

**Manzanilla olives** are pale green to green-brown olives from Spain; they're the classic accompaniment to a glass of dry sherry, as is the custom in southern Spain. Manzanillas have crisp flesh with an oily texture and slightly smoky, rich flavor.

**Cracked Provençal olives** are brine-cured and then cracked, packed, and marinated with *herbes de Provence* and olive oil. Great for hors d'oeuvres, cracked Provençals have firm flesh and a deliciously mild, herbal flavor.

added to their final soaking to add additional flavors. Flavors can vary widely, so ask for a sample to see if the olives suit your taste.

**Dry-curing involves rubbing and packing ripe black olives in coarse salt** to leach out bitterness, followed by rinsing and then soaking in oil for the final cure and for sale. Dry-cured olives have a dry, wrinkled, prune-like appearance and often a coating of olive oil. They're usually stronger in flavor than brine-cured olives.

## **Olive flavors span a wide range**

At the market, you'll see olives in a wide range of colors, from golden yellow, dull green, and bright green, to buff, red, purple, and black, and in many sizes depending on the variety and when they were harvested and cured. You'll find them in jars or offered in open crocks so you can choose among all the dif-

ferent kinds. Finished olives are available both pitted and unpitted, cracked, slit, seasoned, and stuffed.

**Olive flavors cover a range of possibilities:** strong or mild, salty or vegetal; buttery or nutty; spicy or slightly bitter. They can be bittersweet or sour and even richly fruity, with overtones of prune or licorice. Keep a dish of olives on the table throughout a meal; they're surprisingly good with full-bodied, tannic red wines like Barolo from Italy, Cahors from France, and big-style California Cabernets.

**At the market, olives should be unbruised, clean, and firm** (if brine-cured). Brine-cured olives should be plump, with smooth, shiny skins and moist interiors. Dry-cured olives should look meaty and not overly dry.

**Always keep olives moist,** either in brine or sprinkled with olive oil. Store olives in the refrigerator, but be sure to let them come to room temperature before serving. Drain

brined-packed olives before serving, reserving the brine for storage, and then rinse the portion you're going to use in water before eating or cooking with them. (If you need to make extra brine, dissolve one tablespoon coarse or kosher salt in a pint of water.) If the olives you're serving will be sitting out for a while, dress them with a little olive oil to keep them from drying out.

**When cooking with olives, reduce the recipe's salt,** as olives will add their own salty flavors. If the olives you've bought taste a little bitter, toss them with oil and fresh herbs or garlic (or both) to balance their strong flavors.

Depending on their size, olives have only 5 to 20 calories each, and they have a high proportion of healthy mono- and polyunsaturated fats.

*Renee Shepherd is a gardening cook and specialty seed retailer. Her company, Renee's Garden, offers gourmet seed packets at independent nurseries.* ♦

**Bella di Cerignola olives** are from southern Italy along the Adriatic coast. These bright green giants have mild, sweet, dense flesh that clings to the pit. Cerignolas' beautiful color makes them a standout for snacking or serving with drinks; they're a good choice for those who don't like strong-flavored olives. Black, ripened Cerignola olives are even milder in flavor than green ones.

Here are what last year's participants had to say:

Anyone who likes to cook, to eat great food, to drink fine wine, and who enjoys sharing these pleasures with great people will love this trip. Great job.

*Curt Kittelson, Sartell, MN*

Outstanding experience! The CIA and artisan food tour participants were world-class. *Fine Cooking* staff and HMS were terrific, ensuring the trip ran smoothly.

*Hugh Adams, Irving, TX*

I applaud the combined successful efforts of HMS and *Fine Cooking*. The event was a wonderful experience—one that I hope to repeat every year!

*Janice Anderson,  
Renton, WA*

This flagship event was well planned: all who attended were received with enthusiasm from the start to the Moscato Bianco at the farewell dinner. I have attended many events by the other major competitors, and I'd say you really outdid yourselves.

*Donna Tetiva, Montara, CA*

The CIA experience was a lifelong dream for a nonprofessional chef. Thank you for the opportunity.

*Deb Negrete, San Jose, CA*

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Artisan food tours and tastings. We'll travel the back roads to visit and sample the products of passionate artisan producers such as: Ridgely Evers and Colleen McGlynn of DaVero, where we'll see their 4,500 olive trees and taste their award-winning oils; Cindy Callahan and her fabulous Italian-inspired Bellwether

Farms cheeses; Craig Ponsford, owner of the medal-winning Artisan Bakery. Each itinerary will include at least five artisans.

An evening at Kendall-Jackson's California Coast Wine Center, where we'll have a varietal tasting and a dinner prepared from the region's best ingredients.

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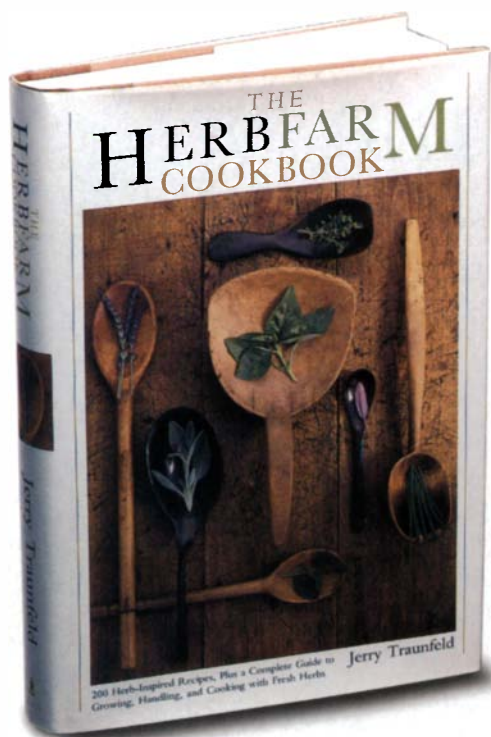
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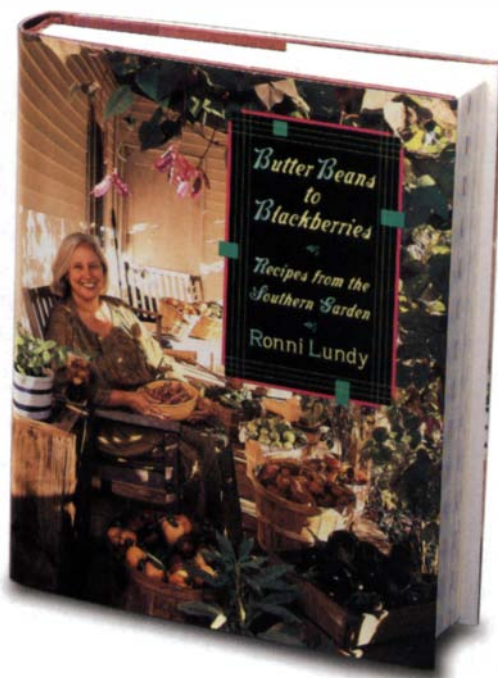
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## Two summer cookbooks, fresh from the garden



ings, while “Cooking with Flowers” reviews the uses of several garden beauties. Traunfeld’s roll call of herbs discusses selected varieties in depth, while a listing of herb plant and seed sources rounds out the book. With its color watercolors of herbs (worthy of framing) and mouthwatering food photographs, *The Herbfarm Cookbook* is handsome as well as supremely useful. I recommend it without reservation to any serious cook.

I also love Ronni Lundy’s latest cookbook, *Butter Beans to Blackberries: Recipes from the Southern Garden*. Since I’m a transplanted southerner living in Nevada, I still pine for the foods of the South, for delicacies like butter beans and mayhaw jelly. Bless her sweet heart, Lundy provides an extensive list of mail-order sources for southern specialties; finally I don’t have to haul home boiled peanuts and fig preserves whenever I visit Mississippi.

For anyone from outside the South, *Butter Beans to Blackberries* provides an excellent introduction to the diversity of southern ways with fruits, berries, and vegetables. A Kentuckian and a food writer (she also wrote *Shuck Beans, Stack Cake & Honest Fried Chicken*), Lundy scoured the region to find the best renderings of tradi-

It’s that blissfully frustrating time again when farmers’ markets are overflowing with crimson tomatoes, fragrant bundles of basil, tender snap beans, seductive bunches of purple-black grapes. And if you’re like me, right about now you’re searching for dynamite new recipes and interesting techniques to make the most of this abundance. Allow me to suggest a couple of great cookbooks that will help.

*The Herbfarm Cookbook*, by Jerry Traunfeld, is the guide I’ve dreamed of almost since my mother sent me, at age four, toddling into the garden armed with blunt-tipped scissors to harvest mint for iced tea. As the long-time chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant outside Seattle, Traunfeld has become an herb authority, employing fresh herbs, greens, and flowers to create the nine-course dinners that have kept tables continuously booked since

1986. It’s no wonder they’re booked: every recipe I’ve tried from *The Herbfarm Cookbook* has been excellent. Dishes such as silky-rich herbed Garlic Flan, juicy Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb (with parsley, rosemary and savory), and Caramelized Tangerines with Rosemary-Lemon Ice created the happiest dinner party I’ve ever given. On another occasion, Onion Tarts fragrant with sage made a fabulous appetizer; I’m looking forward to serving them with a Green Bean & Nasturtium Salad for lunch.

Within the recipes, Traunfeld discusses a variety of ways in which the flavor of herbs may be imparted into a dish. One technique he commonly uses is infusion: submerging

herbs in very hot liquid, letting them steep, and then straining and using the flavored liquid in everything from a minted carrot soup to *crème brûlée* infused with leaves of sweet bay.

What makes this an outstanding book is that in addition to recipes, Traunfeld provides a detailed discussion of herbs and edible flowers. This is no mere review of basil and parsley; Traunfeld includes less common herbs such as sweet cicely and anise hyssop. There’s a chapter on growing herbs, complete with an excellent chart outlining growing requirements. Another chapter covers how to buy, handle, and cook with herbs and features a chart detailing flavor characteristics and recommended pair-

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tional dishes and those of the "New South."

Instead of the usual organization beginning with hors d'oeuvres and ending with desserts, each of these chapters covers a variety of recipes for a type of produce. The chapter on citrus, for example, includes Lime-Butter Fish, Orange Blossom Special Cake, and Citrus Julep. Scattered throughout are stories of the folks who shared their recipes with Lundy or provided the inspiration for her own creations, which together with the listings of restaurants and farm markets throughout the southern

states makes *Butter Beans to Blackberries* a virtual travel guide to the culinary South.

The recipes are as welcoming to the newcomer as a Georgia barbecue. Along the way, Lundy explains the mysteries of southern cuisine, such as why mustard greens are cooked to death (to tenderize them) and why we haven't all keeled over from vitamin deficiency as a result (we sop up all that vitamin-rich cooking liquid). Her Apple-Walnut Cake with Ginger Cream was the hit of my local bake sale, while neighbors tore into the classic Southern-style Green

Beans and Corn Fritters I served, along with the orange blossom cake, which was completely devoured.

Southerners have strongly held opinions, and Lundy and I disagree on one point. She claims sorghum syrup is superior to molasses, and it is sorghum she calls for in these recipes. Well, maybe if you're from Kentucky, which is so far north you're verging on becoming a yank...no, I promised I wouldn't cuss in this nice magazine. All I can say is she never sampled my grandfather Floyd's molasses, and I find molasses far preferable to sorghum.

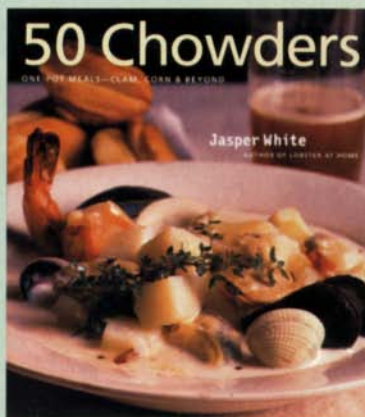
But on every other point we agree, and Lundy provides an invaluable service with her listing of mail-order sources (which appear in the chapters they pertain to). In fact, the rise in popularity of mail-order is what makes this book practical outside the south. How else are you going to make creamy True Grits without top-quality stone-ground white corn grits? Think I'll go order me some now.

*Kay Fahey is a transplanted southerner who has discovered Reno, Nevada, is ideal for growing a garden full of herbs—but not black-eyed peas.* ♦

## Pleasures beyond the garden

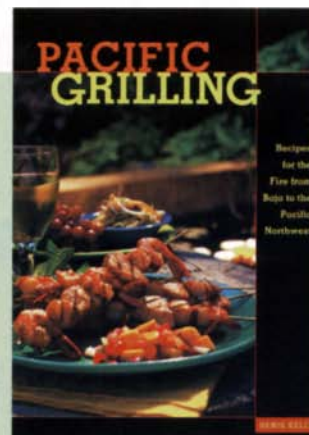
Plucking inspiration from the vegetable garden is only one way to memorable summer meals. If you want to learn to make a killer fish chowder or to grill real fajitas West Coast style, then two new books should help.

Jasper White, the acclaimed New England seafood chef, has written *50 Chowders*, a primer worth more than its wealth of recipes. White's book has a chapter on the folklore and history of chowder making, a detailed chapter on choosing and preparing ingredients for chowder, and another chapter on making stock before the recipes even begin. Each recipe chapter begins with a classic followed by popular variations (e.g., New England Fish Chowder, and then Church Supper Fish Chowder, South Coast Portuguese Fish Chowder, Nova Scotia Chowder, etc.). With chapters on clam chowders, shellfish chowders (including my favorite, Lobster & Corn Chowder), and farmhouse chowders (mostly vegetables), there is a chowder for every cook. Yet despite the specific recipes, White



encourages us, above all, to enjoy the "Zen" of chowder making—catch a fresh fish and slice up some new potatoes with plenty of friends and family around.

California gastronome Denis Kelly obviously feels just as passionately about grilling—West Coast style—as White does about chowder making. In *Pacific Grilling*, Kelly (who co-wrote *The Complete Meat Cookbook* with Bruce Aidells) gives a nostalgic and romantic look at the importance of outdoor cooking on the Pacific Coast from Baja to the Northwest,



where 50-gallon drums, mesquite fires, Weber kettles, and fancy gas grills each grab their share of the communal fire. Kelly gathers memoirs and anecdotes from local barbecue kings and restaurant chefs alike, picking up loads of grilling tips along the way and chronicling the enormous influence of immigrants on cooking in California. Only in a book called *Pacific Grilling* would you find recipes as diverse and enticing as Fish Tacos with Three Salsas, Grilled Prawns with Thai Cilantro Sauce, Smoke-Roasted Chickens with Three-Pepper Rub, Alvarado Street Chili Burger, Hawaiian Chicken, and Korean Barbecue. *Pacific Grilling* is a charmer.

—Susie Middleton, managing editor



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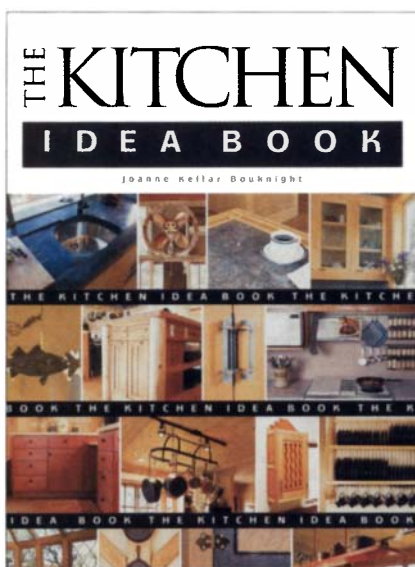
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A nubby cutting board is an ideal surface for kneading bread dough with less flour.

## Nubby cutting board for kneading bread dough

A polyethylene cutting board with a nubby surface makes an excellent surface for working with bread dough or pastry. The lightly textured surface is almost nonstick, perfect for kneading most bread doughs. I also find that slack doughs and pastry require less flour for kneading or rolling. I stabilize the board with a damp kitchen towel underneath it.

—Margaret Hirsch,  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

instead of salt. The soy sauce offers another level of flavor and gives color as well.

—Kurt Kolseth,  
Mundelein, IL

sturdy, wide-bottomed glass also works.

—Diane K. Wilson,  
Pacific Grove, CA

## Chopping apricots

I recently had to chop a large quantity of dried apricots for a stuffing, a tedious job when done with a knife since the apricots stick to one another and to the knife. (For a small amount, I find that scissors work better.) Using the food processor is a nice alternative, except that if you start the machine with the apricots already in the bowl, you will have a sticky mass of unevenly chopped apricots. Instead, turn the machine on and, with the blade spinning, drop a few apricots at a time into the feed tube. Continue doing this with all the apricots, and in a matter of seconds you will have evenly chopped apricots. I imagine this would also work with other sticky dried fruits, as well.

—Pearl Watkins,  
West Hollywood, CA

## Meat pounder smoothes a crumb crust

I use my meat pounder for pressing cookie crumb crusts into a pie plate or cheesecake pan. The heavy, flat metal disk helps me get an even thickness and eliminates marks left by my fingers. If you don't have a pounder, a

## Better technique for using a rasp grater

I love the new rasp-like zester on the market (see *Fine Cooking* #35, p. 17). I used to hold the ruler-size piece of stainless steel at an angle with one end on the counter and then run the lemon or lime down along its grating slots, as you might grate cheese. The problem with this method is that you can't see exactly where you've just zested, an important factor if you're trying to avoid the bitter white pith that lies just below the skin of the fruit.

It's much better to hold the fruit in one hand and use the



Use a straight vegetable peeler to scoop capers out of a narrow bottle.

## Potato peeler reaches into caper jar

My potato peeler comes in handy to scoop capers and small olives out of their narrow jars. (This only works with old-fashioned straight peelers, of course, not the newer Y-shaped ones.) I also use my peeler to scrape the gills from the underside of portabella mushrooms.

—Joyce A. Foti,  
Wading River, NY

## Soy sauce boosts gravy

When making gravy, I sometimes add a bit of soy sauce

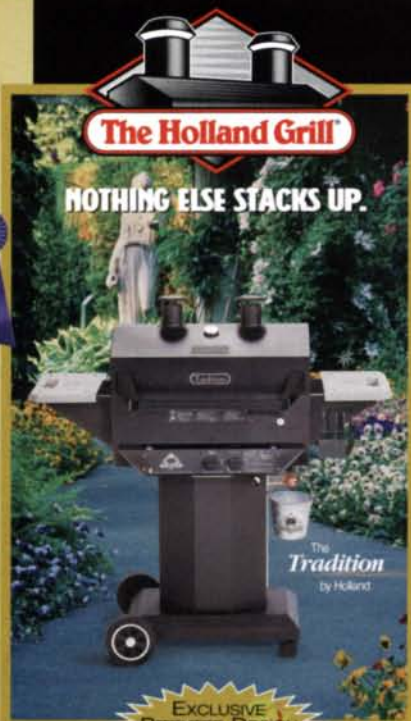


To make grating citrus zest easier, handle your rasp grater like a nail file, moving the rasp rather than the fruit.

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rasp like a nail file, moving the rasp, not the fruit. Not only can you see exactly where you're zesting, but you're also likely to apply less force—another way to avoid the pith.

—Joan McAllister,  
Brookfield, CT

## Snagging a single strand of pasta

When cooking long, thin pastas, such as spaghetti or vermicelli, it's always difficult to fish out a single strand to test for doneness. I've found that using a serrated knife (I use a tomato knife) works well by catching the pasta on the serrations.

—Daniel Kramer,  
Amherst, MA

## Using limp basil and overgrown zucchini

When a large bunch of basil wilts and droops sooner than



A serrated knife is perfect for removing a single strand of pasta.

I'd like, I use up the leaves to make an intense basil oil: Use 1 part loosely packed leaves to 1 part oil. Put the leaves in a colander and scald with boiling water. Drain well and squeeze out excess water.

Purée the basil with the oil in a food processor. Refrigerate for 24 hours and then strain. Store the oil in the refrigerator. This technique also works nicely with short-lived arugula. Use 1 part arugula to

2 parts oil. You can omit the blanching, but the color is better if you take this additional step.

Also, when I'm faced with zucchini the size of baseball bats, I juice them. Zucchini is mostly water, so I run the overgrown zucchini through a juice extractor. You can also shred them in the food processor using the fine shredding disk and then squeeze the shredded vegetables in cheesecloth to extract as much juice as possible. I use this flavorful, healthy zucchini water as a vegetable stock, as a base for a more complex stock or sauce, or as part of the liquid in bread recipes. Sometimes I combine it with carrot juice, salt it lightly, and drink it icy cold.

—Susan Asanovic,  
Wilton, CT ♦

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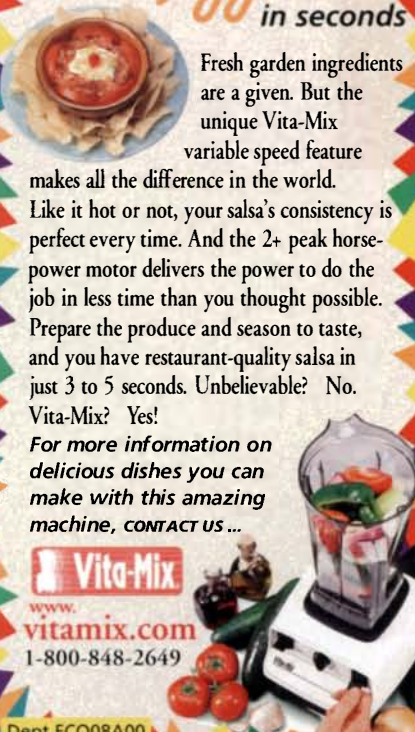
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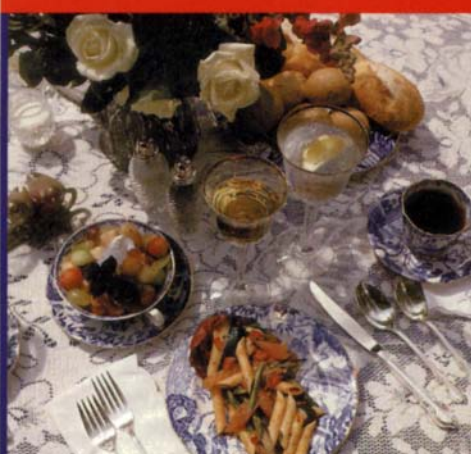


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# Visit the Farmers' Market with a Menu in Mind

**"At the market, don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask for a taste," advises John Ash.**

A fresh produce guru shares his shopping strategies and six recipes for a sensational summer dinner

BY JOHN ASH

When I first started cooking professionally—a long time ago—I was lucky enough to work as a *stagiaire* (a chef apprentice) in France. I cooked at a little country restaurant and inn with a French friend of mine, and each day we would go to the market early in the morning and pick up whatever looked best. It was an idyllic experience, but it also taught me how important it is to have some sort of plan *before* going to the market. At first I was tempted to buy everything—as I still am at my local farmers' market—but what saved us then, and still saves me now, was having a rough plan of the kind of dishes we wanted to prepare that evening. I use this same strategy now at home so that I don't get carried away and wind up with too much of some things and not enough of others. The farmers' market is just too seductive.

To avoid being overwhelmed, ask yourself a few questions before heading out. Are you buying for a specific meal (maybe a special dinner party this weekend)? If so, then how many courses do you want to have, or will it be an *alfresco* buffet? How many different dishes do you want to offer? In the



Photos: this page, Amy Albert; all others except where noted, Ben Fink



## LATE SUMMER FARMERS' MARKET MENU



**Watermelon  
Agua Fresca**

**Honeydew  
Lemonade**

**Frico**



**Salad of Spicy Greens, Queso Blanco,  
& Warm Tomato Vinaigrette**

late summer, you might ask yourself, do you want to make this an all vegetable- and fruit-based menu (like the one I've suggested here) since the produce is so spectacular right now? How much cooking do you really want to do? Maybe you want to serve almost everything fresh and uncooked, supplemented by some wonderful cheeses, breads, and salsas.

By asking yourself these questions, you'll begin to form a plan. Jot down a few notes if you want to, just to remind yourself of your ideal courses. When I do this little bit of noodling before I go, I don't wind up getting carried away by all the goodies. I can still be inspired by what looks best—and I can certainly be flexible about making substitutions—but I can also tell myself, "Okay, you've got the salad covered, now



**Fresh Corn Polenta  
with Sautéed Market  
Vegetables & Smoked  
Tomato Sauce**

look for some vegetables for the main course."

With a plan in mind, have a market bag in hand. I keep a basic kit of items in the trunk of my car so that I'm ready whenever I go to a market. A large canvas or mesh bag with comfortable handles or a shoulder strap is a must. If possible, get one that has a flat, square bottom so that you can more easily stack delicate, bruisable items. I also include a stash of extra plastic bags from the supermarket—a great way to recycle. Remember to bring along lots of cash in small denominations: \$1 and \$5 bills, plus a few dollars in change; most of the sellers at farmers' markets operate pretty simply, without the aid of a cash register. I also include a small hand towel and a folding knife in my kit.

Once you're at the market, take a look at everything before you start to buy. With your menu in mind, walk around and see who has the



**Blackberry  
Grunt**



best quality and prices. Before buying, don't be afraid to ask for a taste. Like cooks, most growers and producers are very proud of what they do, and they love the opportunity to tell you about it. Remember not to buy more than you can use, but at the same time, don't constrain yourself too much. One of my favorite things about the farmers' market is that I almost always discover something I've never seen before. And if you're anything like me, finding something new is an instant challenge to see what you can do with it.

For this time of year, start dreaming of tomatoes and corn, beans and zucchini, berries and melon before visiting the market. Since this season is such a blockbuster for fruits and vegetables, one of my favorite late summer menus features them in every course (see the recipes starting at right). Polenta with fresh corn and sautéed beans, squash, and peppers has a smoky tomato sauce so intense that it's practically meaty in character. Along with a salad of spicy greens with a warm tomato vinaigrette and two refreshing melon drinks—not to mention a homey dessert of fresh blackberries with little dumplings—the whole menu takes advantage of the season while leaving plenty of room for improvisation. Sauté your pick of fresh vegetables to top the polenta, or substitute blueberries for blackberries in the grunt. Add a handful of your favorite herbs to the salad, use any sweet fruit for the drinks, or buy a wonderful-looking freshly made cheese to have with the drinks or salad, or on its own. Just try not to buy more than your refrigerator can hold or your friends can consume in the next few days.

**Sweet and salty flavors start the meal. Purée the ripest melons for refreshing drinks to serve with crisp Parmesan frico.**

### Watermelon Agua Fresca

A refreshing *agua fresca* is a popular drink in Mexico and all over Latin America. *Agua frescas* are basically fresh ripe fruit juices, sweetened and served over or blended with ice. An interesting variation is to freeze a fruity white wine and then crush it and substitute it for the crushed ice. Make two batches of this recipe to serve six people. *Yields 3 cups.*

**4 cups coarsely chopped seedless watermelon flesh**  
**Juice of 1 medium fresh lime**  
**1 cup crushed ice or 1¼ cups ice cubes**  
**1 Tbs. superfine sugar (or to taste)**  
**Orange slices and mint sprigs for garnish**

Purée the melon in a blender. Add the lime juice, ice, and sugar and blend until smooth. Pour into tall glasses and garnish with the orange slices and mint.

### Honeydew Lemonade

Take advantage of sweet summer melons (use any variety) with this refreshing drink. *Yields 6½ cups.*

**Grated zest of 2 lemons**  
**1 cup fresh lemon juice**  
**¾ cup sugar**  
**1 small honeydew melon (about 3 lb.), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes (about 6 cups)**  
**2 cups plain or sparkling water**  
**Thin lemon slices and mint sprigs for garnish**

Combine the zest, lemon juice, and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer until the sugar dissolves, about 5 min. Strain and cool.

Purée the melon in a blender. In a pitcher, combine the melon juice and the cooled syrup and mix well. Chill. Just before serving, add the water and serve over ice, garnished with the lemon slices and mint.



**Make four frico at a time** by sprinkling finely grated cheese in 4-inch rounds. Use a fork to spread the cheese evenly and then bake until melted and crisp.



**Hot off the pan, give the frico a whimsical shape** by laying it over a bottle, a rolling pin, or other cylinder.

## Frico (Cheese Crisps)

These fried cheese crisps can be made in a nonstick sauté pan one by one, or in batches on baking sheets in the oven. The goal is to allow the cheese to melt to form a texture that's lacy but that still holds together, so be sure to sprinkle the cheese lightly. Serve them as an hors d'oeuvre with the melon drinks. Any extra make a terrific crisp garnish for the polenta. *Yields 10 to 12 crisps.*

**2 cups finely shredded or grated (not chopped) *parmigiano reggiano*, Asiago, aged Cheddar, aged Gouda, Manchego, or other hard cheese**  
**1 tsp. lightly toasted crushed cumin seed or fennel seed (or other spices if you like)**

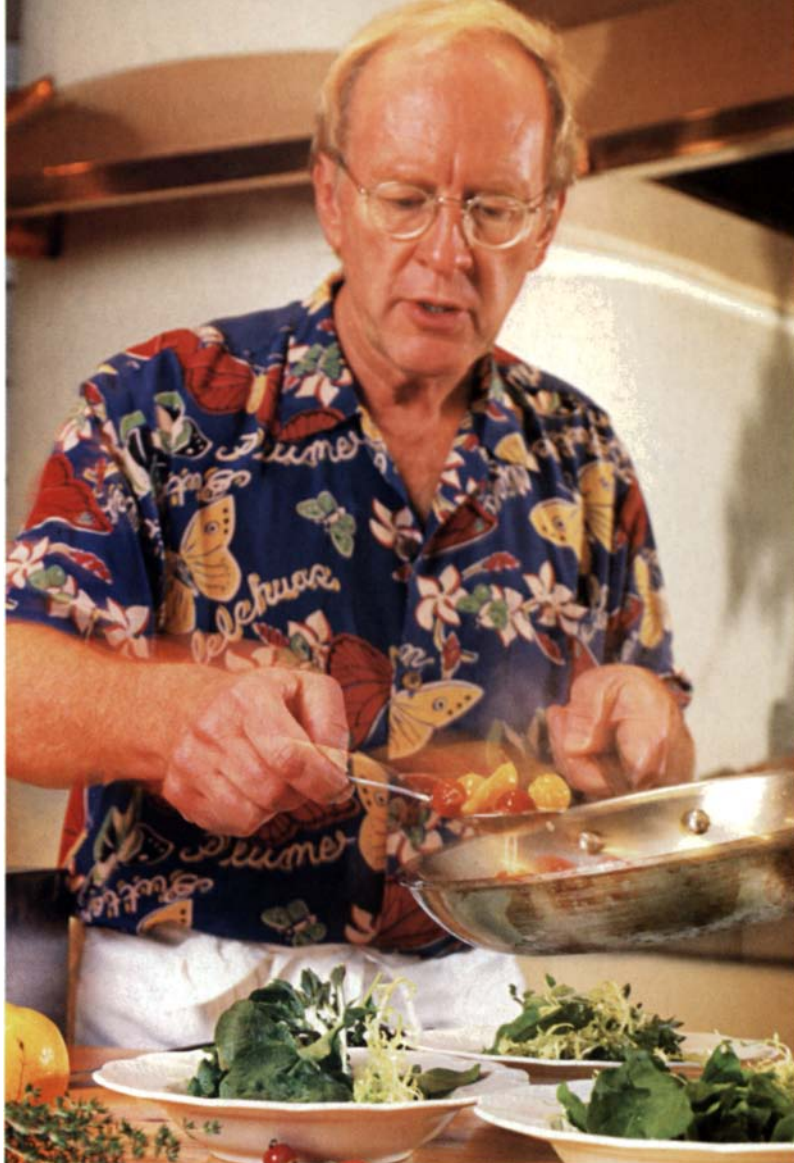
Heat the oven to 375°F. Cover two large baking sheets with kitchen parchment. Combine the cheese and spice. Sprinkle 2 Tbs. of the mixture to form a 4- to 4½-inch round. Spread the cheese evenly with a fork. Repeat with the rest of the mixture, leaving 2 inches between each round. Bake each sheet (one at a time) until the crisps just begin to color, 6 to 8 min. Don't let them fully brown or the cheese will be bitter. Use a spatula to lift the edges of the crisps and loosen them from the pan. Remove the crisps and immediately lay them over a rolling pin or the side of a bottle to give them a curved shape. Or for a flat *frico*, just transfer to paper towels. When cooled, store the crisps in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

## Salad of Spicy Greens with Fried Cheese & Tiny Tomato Vinaigrette

At the farmers' market, choose a mix of young, firm, spicy greens that will hold up to the warm vinaigrette in this salad. The cheese I like for this recipe is called Panela—a Mexican cheese that won't melt when you fry it. You can find it in Hispanic markets, but Mexican *queso blanco*, another firm, fresh cow's milk cheese that also holds its shape when fried, is more widely available in U.S. grocery stores. If you can't find either, use fresh mozzarella (drained well and patted dry) or even Muenster. *Serves four.*

**8 cups savory, peppery greens (such as watercress, arugula, frisée, young mustard, nasturtium)**  
**8 oz. Panela, queso blanco, or mozzarella, sliced into 8 pieces, each about ½ inch thick**  
**½ cup all-purpose flour seasoned with salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**1 egg beaten with 1 tsp. water until frothy**  
**⅔ cup fresh breadcrumbs**  
**3 Tbs. unsalted butter**  
**3 Tbs. olive oil**  
**1 Tbs. minced shallot or scallion**  
**3 Tbs. dry white wine**  
**¾ cup rich homemade or low-salt canned vegetable or chicken stock**  
**1½ cups tiny cherry tomatoes**  
**Sea or coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste**  
**2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**  
**1 Tbs. mixed chopped herbs, such as chives, flat-leaf parsley, and basil**  
**2 Tbs. coarsely chopped pitted oil-cured olives for garnish**

(Continued)



**John Ash** arranges the greens ahead so the warm tomato vinaigrette goes straight from the sauté pan onto the salads.

## Buying the food is half the fun

Visiting a farmers' market is always an adventure for me. I love the opportunity to rediscover "real" foods, and to talk directly to the folks who produce them. And I love the feeling of being reconnected with nature and the movement of the seasons. Depending on the time of year, my market in northern California might have fava beans, green garlic, and asparagus (spring), or it might have melons, tomatoes, corn, squash, and wild berries (late summer). To add to the excitement, I can now find fresh fish, artisan cheeses and breads, flowers, and enough freshly made salsa, mustards, vinegars, honey, and other condiments at the markets to fill a pantry.

The number of farmers' markets around the country has really exploded. I travel a great deal—teaching cooking classes and at wine and food seminars—and I'm amazed at the number and quality of markets that exist, often in the most unlikely locations, like an abandoned city lot or a shopping mall parking lot. If you're new to an area, it's a great way to get a feel for the people and "flavors" of your new home.

To find a market in your area, check with your state department of agriculture or your county extension agent, or visit [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets). Click on your state in the map displayed and you'll get a list of farmers' markets.



Divide the greens among 4 shallow soup plates. Dust the cheese slices with the seasoned flour and then dip them in the beaten egg. Let the excess egg drip off and roll the cheese in the breadcrumbs, pressing gently to coat evenly. Heat 2 Tbs. of the butter and 2 Tbs. of the olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and quickly sauté the cheese until lightly browned and crisp (about 1 min. per side). Drain the cheese on paper towels and keep warm in a low oven.

Wipe out the pan and heat the remaining 1 Tbs. butter and 1 Tbs. oil in it. Quickly sauté the shallots until softened. Add the wine and stock and reduce by half over high heat. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper, and lemon juice and sauté until the tomatoes just begin to soften, 1 to 2 min. Stir in the herbs and spoon the contents of the skillet over and around the greens. Arrange the fried cheese on the salads and scatter the olives over. Serve immediately.

### **Creamy Polenta with Fresh Corn, Sautéed Market Vegetables & Smoked Tomato Sauce**

I like the combination of "New World" vegetables—corn, beans, squash, and tomatoes—in this summer recipe, but feel free to choose any good-looking vegetables at the market to top the polenta; you can grill rather than sauté them if you like. I like to make a fairly loose polenta, and I add the fresh corn kernels for contrast. *Serves four to six.*

#### **FOR THE POLENTA:**

**2 Tbs. unsalted butter**  
**1 cup finely chopped onion**  
**5 cups rich or homemade low-salt canned vegetable or chicken stock**  
**1 cup coarsely ground polenta**  
**1¼ cups fresh corn kernels (from about 2 ears), cobs scraped to get the milk, husks reserved**

**The robust flavor of smoked tomato sauce is the perfect accent for fresh corn polenta and crunchy market vegetables.**

#### **FOR THE SAUTÉED VEGETABLES:**

**2 Tbs. olive oil; more as needed**  
**6 oz. haricots verts, trimmed (or young green beans, trimmed and cut diagonally 1-inch long)**  
**6 to 8 oz. baby pattypan squash, cut in half (or 2 young summer squash or zucchini, cut in rounds)**  
**1 large or 2 small red or yellow bell peppers (or both) cut into triangle or diamond shapes**  
**Sea or coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste**

#### **TO SERVE:**

**Smoked Tomato Sauce (see the recipe at right)**  
**Zucchini blossoms, currant tomatoes, chopped chives, or any other garnish you see at the market**

**To make the polenta**—In a deep saucepan, combine the butter and onion and stir over moderate heat until the onions are softened and translucent, about 5 min. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Gradually stir in the polenta and continue stirring for a couple of minutes to prevent any lumps. Reduce the heat to a bare simmer, cover the pan, and cook undisturbed for another 6 to 7 min. Uncover and stir vigorously for 1 to 2 min. Cover and repeat two more times, until the polenta is soft and somewhat thickened. Stir in the corn and any corn liquid and cook for another 1 to 2 min. Add a bit of water if necessary to maintain a creamy but thick consistency.

**To sauté the vegetables**—While the polenta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. In batches, sauté the beans, squash, and peppers until crisp-tender, adding more oil as needed. Season to taste with salt and pepper, set aside, and keep warm.

**To serve**—Spoon the warm polenta into the center of individual bowls or one large serving bowl. Arrange the sautéed vegetables over and around the polenta. Spoon some of the smoked tomato sauce around the edge of the polenta. Garnish as desired with herbs and blossoms.



**Sweet, fresh corn adds texture and flavor to the smooth, creamy polenta.**



**Wrinkly but tasty.** For a full-flavored sauce, smoke the tomatoes until they're shriveled and beginning to char.

## Smoked Tomato Sauce

The character of this sauce depends on the contrast of sweet and smoky flavors. For sweetness, use only the ripest summer (beefsteak) tomatoes. For smokiness, smoke the tomatoes in an outdoor grill or a smoker (see p. 66) if you have one. The tomatoes need to be hot-smoked so that they not only pick up smoky flavor but so that their juices caramelize slightly, too. When I demonstrate this sauce to cooking classes, I rig up an indoor smoker using an old cast-iron Dutch oven or other beat-up pot. I put a cup of wood chips on aluminum foil and put them directly on the bottom of the pot. I put the tomatoes in a pie pan (elevated by a ramekin) over the chips, cover the pot, and set it over medium-low heat. But this method can fill your kitchen with a strong smoky smell, so the recipe here describes an easy way to smoke them on an outdoor grill. This versatile sauce freezes well and is worth making in larger batches for future use.

*Yields about 2 cups.*

**2 lb. ripe tomatoes, cored**

**4 large cloves garlic**

**¼ tsp. chipotle chile in adobo (or other hot sauce), or to taste**

**2 Tbs. unsalted butter, softened**

**A few drops of balsamic vinegar**

**Sea or coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste**

Light a charcoal grill, using enough coals to make a hot fire on one side of the kettle. Fill a container with 2 cups of wood chips (use heavy-duty foil to make an open package, or use a small cast-iron pan or steel chip box). Fit the cored tomatoes snugly in a disposable aluminum cake pan. Tuck a garlic clove into each tomato where the core came out. When the fire is ready, put the container of wood chips into the grill, next to the hot coals. Put the pan of tomatoes on the grill grate, across from but not directly on top of the hot coals. Cover, leaving the air vents open to keep the heat going. You should see smoke coming from the wood chips. Check on the fire every 15 min., adding more charcoal as needed to keep a hot fire going and more wood chips if needed. Rotate the pan of tomatoes occasionally so that different sides are closest to the heat. Smoke the tomatoes until they're very soft, their skins are darkened, and they've released their juices, 45 to 75 min. Remove the pan from the grill and let the tomatoes cool slightly.

Carefully transfer the tomatoes, garlic, and all the juices in the pan into a blender and process until smooth. Add the chipotle chile to taste. Strain through a medium or coarse sieve, pressing down to force most of the solids through. When ready to serve, bring the sauce to a simmer in a small saucepan. Whisk in the butter and season the sauce to taste with a few drops of balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper. Keep warm.

## Blackberry Grunt

This old-fashioned dessert is called a grunt supposedly because of the sound the berries make as they simmer. You can substitute blueberries for the blackberries if you like. *Serves six.*

**FOR THE BERRIES:**

**6 cups blackberries**

**¾ cup sugar**

**⅓ cup water**

**1 Tbs. grated lemon zest**

**FOR THE DUMPLING DOUGH:**

**4½ oz. (1 cup) all-purpose flour**

**2 Tbs. sugar**

**1 tsp. baking powder**

**½ tsp. baking soda**

**⅛ tsp. salt**

**2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**

**½ cup buttermilk; more as needed**

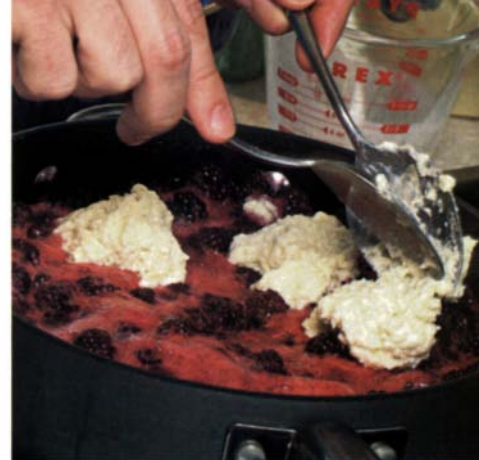
**1 Tbs. sugar mixed with ½ tsp. ground cinnamon**

**Vanilla ice cream for garnish (optional)**

In a deep 10-inch skillet that has a tight-fitting lid, combine the berries, sugar, water, and zest.

**To make the dumpling dough**—In a bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir in the melted butter. Add enough of the buttermilk to form a soft, sticky dough that's slightly wetter than a biscuit dough.

Meanwhile, bring the berry mixture to a boil over high heat, stirring once or twice. Reduce to a simmer and, using a soup spoon, spoon the dough over the fruit, creating about 8 small dumplings. Sprinkle the dumplings with the cinnamon-sugar mixture. Cover the skillet tightly with the lid or foil and steam over medium-low heat, without uncovering, until the dumplings are set and the surface is dry when touched with a fingertip, about 15 min. (If you're not sure if the dumplings are done, you can gently break one open with a fork.) Try not to remove the lid (which would let steam escape) before 15 min., and if the dumplings need further cooking, quickly return the lid. Serve immediately, spooning the warm grunt (it will be fairly liquid) into small bowls. Garnish with vanilla ice cream, if you like.



**The dumplings cook in the fruit-scented steam from the bubbling blackberries, so cover the pot quickly.**

*John Ash is a cooking teacher, an author, and the director of food and wine education for Fetzer Vineyards. ♦*



## Look to Chardonnay & Pinot Noir

The delicious recipes in this easy-going farmers' market menu are what you might call "fence-sitters": dishes that can shine with either red or white alongside them, depending on your taste. So serve both, but stick with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, Burgundy varietals that California winemakers happen to be doing great things with. For Chardonnay, here's your chance to serve a rich, buttery one with a touch of oak. Such wines often overwhelm subtler dishes, but in this case, La Crema Reserve, Chateau Souverain, or Matanzas Creek,

all from Sonoma, would be delicious with the rich, zingy cheese crisps, the salad's fried cheese, and the nutty-sweet flavors of the vegetables, corn, and polenta.

The smoky tomato sauce calls for Pinot Noir's earth and fruit aromas and spunky acidity. Pinot Noir by Gloria Ferrer (Carneros), by Clos du Bois (Sonoma), or by Morgan (Monterey) would make for great sipping with all the savory dishes on this menu.

*Amy Albert is an associate editor for Fine Cooking.*



# Cool Summer Salads

Tossed with fragrant herbs and a bright dressing, beans make a light yet filling dish

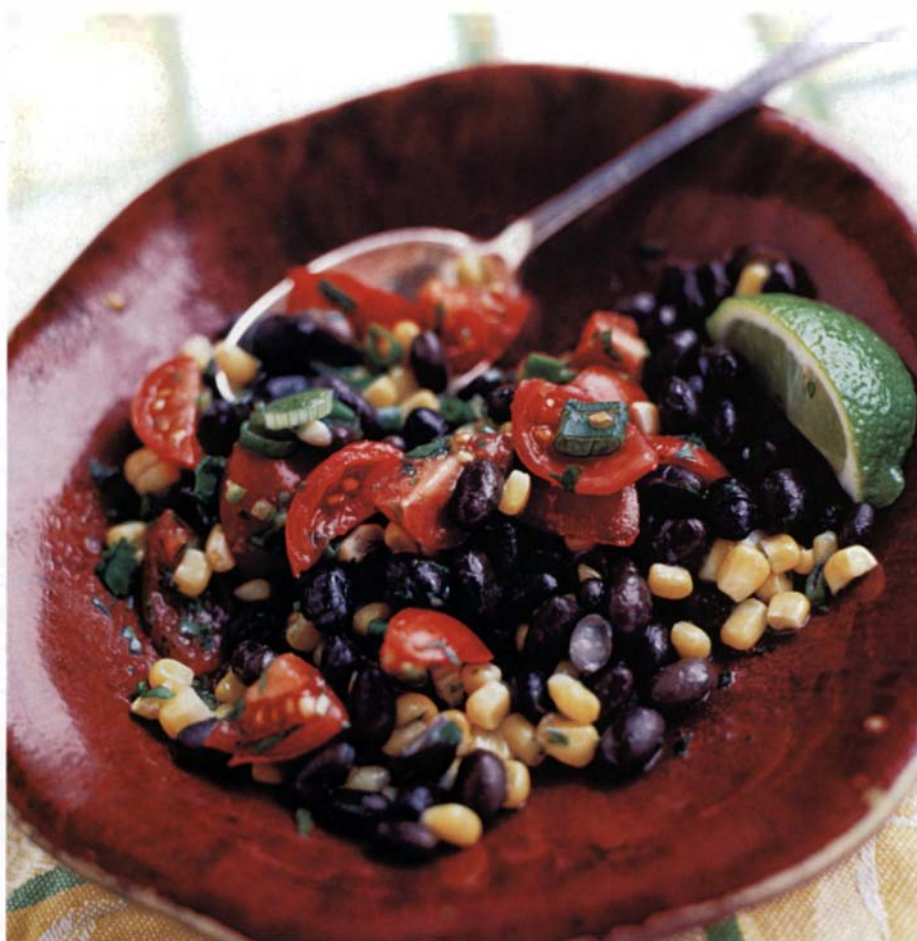
BY JAN NEWBERRY

In the summer, I'm always looking for foods that are filling but not hot and not heavy, and cool bean salads fit the bill nicely. After cooking the beans and letting them cool in their broth, I strain them and toss them with all kinds of summertime ingredients: basil and tomatoes from my garden; corn and chiles from the farmers' market; cooling yogurt and crunchy cucumbers from the fridge. The salads I make taste vibrant and light, but they have a meaty, substantial bite. I like these salads for a light lunch along with some bread—crusty French or Italian with the white bean salad, warmed tortillas with the black beans, and pita or naan with the chickpea salad.

## Start with dried beans for the best flavor and texture

Look, you could easily make these salads by opening a can or two of beans and mixing them with the seasonings and dressings in the recipes. I'll even give you a hint: 1 cup dried beans gives you 2½ to 3 cups cooked beans. But with the exception of chickpeas, which actually take well to canning, most beans suffer, becoming quite mushy, when canned.

When you use canned beans, you also miss a chance to add extra flavor to your salads. Including a few aromatic vegetables and seasonings in the pot when cooking dried beans is an opportunity to add depth and character to the final dish.



**Black beans, corn, and tomato—a classic trio.** The heat from a chile, some chopped cilantro, and a squeeze of lime brighten the dish.

If you do use canned beans, try a few brands to see which you like best; I've been most impressed by the organic ones. Just remember to always rinse canned beans before using.

**Cook dried beans a day ahead for best results.** Most beans improve in flavor and texture when cooked a day in advance. If you plan to hold them for a day or so, refrigerate the beans once they've cooled. If kept at room temperature for too long, beans can sour and ferment.

## To soak or not to soak?

Soaking dried beans before cooking has two benefits: most soaked beans cook faster—up to an hour less. And if the

soaking water is poured off, the beans will be easier to digest because you're leaching out and pouring off the oligosaccharides that cause gas.

If you are not like me and are good at planning ahead, by all means cover the beans in cold water and soak them for as little as four hours or as long as eight (the overnight in the direction "soak the beans overnight"). Drain and rinse the beans before cooking them.

There's also a quick-soaking method. Cover the beans with water and bring them to a boil. Boil for a few minutes and then let them soak for an hour off the heat, drain, and then add fresh water and continue cooking. If you're concerned

# From a Pot of Beans

about the digestibility of beans—they affect some people more than others—then you may want to try quick-soaking. But if you think a quick soak will save you time during cooking, then don't bother. By the time you've boiled and soaked the beans, you could have cooked them that extra hour already.

If you decide to do a quick soak, here's a way to save some time. After your beans have soaked for almost the full hour, bring a teakettle full of water to a boil. After draining off the soaking water, cover the beans with the hot water to give you a head start on the cooking.

**The fresher the bean, the faster it will cook.** Many people believe dried beans last forever. In fact, very old beans and those that have been stored in hot, humid conditions might never soften even after hours of cooking. Yet it's almost impossible to tell the age of a dried bean. If you have a good whole-foods market that goes through beans quickly, you'd do well to buy them there. Boutique and heirloom beans are available by mail from small growers (see Sources, p. 80). They're inevitably fresher than supermarket beans, and they rarely need soaking to cook in a reasonable amount of time.

**A pressure cooker is another option.** Pressure cookers can cook beans quickly and beautifully, giving them an almost silken quality. Follow the manufacturer's directions carefully because debris such as floating bean skins can clog the apparatus. Also, using a pressure cooker makes it hard to gauge when the beans are done. For bean salads, where you want the beans to be tender yet whole, err on the side of undercooking in the pressure cooker and then finish cooking conventionally if need be.

## What can toughen a bean: the myths and the facts

Food scientist Shirley Corriher, a *Fine Cooking* contributing editor, recently wrote about bean cookery for the magazine (#37, p. 72). In the article, she not



**Draining soaked beans makes them easier to digest.** With the water goes the oligosaccharides that are the cause for beans' less-than-polite reputation. (Out go some nutrients, too, however.)



**For beans with more flavor, cook them with aromatic vegetables and herbs,** such as the garlic, onion, carrot, and thyme that's added to these white beans. And don't forget the salt.



**Skim off the scum as well as the "floaters"—beans that have shrunk in their shells and which may now house dirt (trapped air is what makes them float).**



only rejects the long and widely held belief that salt added at the beginning of cooking can toughen beans, but she also suggests the opposite is true, that salting beans early on—even during soaking—will make them more tender. Since I'm a believer in the flavor benefits of salt, I'm all in favor of her advice. I've tried it, and it's true.

**Avoid adding tomatoes or other acidic ingredients during cooking.** Tomato sauce, wine, lemon juice, and vinegar prevent the starch on the inside of the bean from swelling and becoming tender. While I add many of these ingredients to my bean salads, they don't go in until the beans are fully cooked and soft.

And speaking of acidic ingredients: I don't dress my cooked beans until the day I serve the salad. Though the beans need some time to absorb the flavor from the dressing, too much time in contact with the acidic ingredients—and this includes yogurt—will make the beans mushy.

### Brighten beans with vibrant flavors

Beans are eaten around the world with all kinds of flavorings and accompaniments. That broad thought was my guide as I developed these robustly flavored salads. Black beans, for example, seemed well-suited to a Mexican style salad, while the flavors of the Mediterranean—*haricots verts*, anchovies, basil, thyme, and fruity olive oil—enhance the creamy white beans. I chose Indian flavors—cumin, ginger, yogurt, cilantro—for the chickpea salad because chickpeas are used heavily in Indian cooking. I easily could have gone a Middle Eastern route, too—garlic, parsley, olive oil, and tangy feta, for example.

This brings me to my final thought, for the moment anyway, about summertime and beans: consider experimenting with a pot of cooked beans to create your own cool salads. One way to start is to substitute cooked beans for pasta in your favorite pasta salads. Like pasta, beans are fairly neutral in flavor and will take on the flavor of the dressing and the other ingredients in the salad. Or increase the amount of dressing for your favorite green or composed salad to accommodate a smattering of cooked beans; I guarantee you'll find the dish more satisfying.

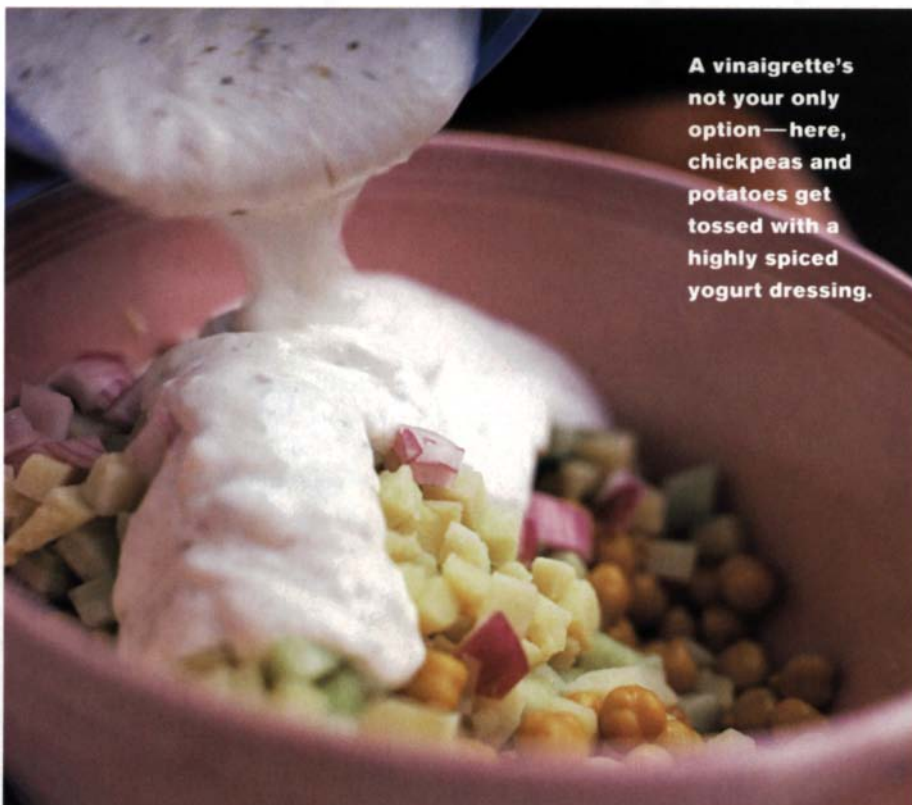
### Chickpea Salad with Spiced Yogurt Dressing

If you use canned chickpeas in place of dried, don't cook them. Add the turmeric and salt to them (but not the onion or bay leaves) and continue with the recipe as directed. Toast whole spices by heating them in a heavy-based skillet just until fragrant; crush them with a mortar and pestle or grind them coarsely in a coffee grinder dedicated to spices. *Serves four to six.*

**1 cup dried chickpeas, well rinsed (soaked and drained, if you like), or 3 cups canned (see note above)**

In a deep, heavy-based pot, cover the chickpeas with 6 to 8 cups cold water. Add the turmeric, bay leaves, yellow onion, and 1 tsp. salt. Over high heat, bring to a boil; reduce to a gentle simmer, skimming any foam that rises to the surface. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 90 min.; let cool in the broth. (Refrigerate the cooled beans in the broth if holding for more than a few hours; bring to room temperature before assembling the salad.)

In a heavy-based pot, cover the potatoes with salted water. Bring to a boil over high heat and cook until tender, about 20 min. Drain. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut them into small cubes.



**¼ tsp. turmeric**  
**2 bay leaves, crumbled**  
**1 small yellow onion, cut in half**  
**Salt**  
**3 small potatoes (about 8 oz. total)**  
**1 cup plain yogurt**  
**¼ cup sour cream**  
**1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh ginger**  
**1½ tsp. cumin seeds, toasted and coarsely ground**  
**1 tsp. fennel seeds, toasted and coarsely ground**  
**1 medium-size hot green chile, seeded and finely chopped**  
**1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and chopped**  
**½ small red onion, chopped**  
**¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro**  
**¼ cup finely chopped fresh mint**



**Chickpeas warrant ample seasoning** due to their bland nature and the cool temperature at which the salad is served.



**Jan Newberry (left) tosses green beans into the white bean salad.** "Leave the chopped basil for last," she says. "The delicate herb bruises easily and needs to be tossed in more gently."

In a small bowl, combine the yogurt and sour cream. Add the ginger, cumin, fennel, and chile. Mix well.

Drain the chickpeas, discarding the onion and bay leaves. In a serving bowl, combine the chickpeas, potatoes, cucumber, and red onion. Mix in the yogurt dressing, cilantro, and mint and combine well. Let sit for 15 min. Taste and add more salt if needed. Serve at room temperature.

### **White & Green Bean Salad with Tomatoes & Basil**

Use the biggest white beans you can find. I like fat Emargo beans; they're creamy and mellow, with a rich, nutty flavor. *Serves six to eight.*

**1 cup large white beans, such as Emargo or Great Northern, well rinsed (soaked and drained, if you like)**

**Several sprigs fresh thyme**

**1 large clove garlic, smashed**

**1 small yellow onion, cut in half**

**1 small carrot, cut into several pieces**

**Salt**

**1 large shallot, finely chopped**

**2 salt-packed anchovies, filleted, (or 4 oil-packed anchovy fillets), rinsed, patted dry, and finely chopped**

**3 Tbs. red-wine vinegar**

**Freshly ground black pepper**

**½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**1 lb. cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters**

**1 lb. haricots verts or regular green beans, trimmed and cut into pieces if large**

**½ cup chopped fresh basil**

In a deep, heavy-based pot, cover the beans with 6 to 8 cups cold water. Add the thyme, garlic, onion, carrot, and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, skimming any foam that rises to the surface. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 90 min.; let cool in the broth. (Refrigerate the beans in the broth if holding for more than a few hours; bring to room temperature before assembling the salad.)

In a large serving bowl, combine the shallot, anchovies, vinegar, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper. Whisk in the olive oil until well combined. Drain the white beans and add them and the tomatoes to the bowl. Toss until the vegetables are well coated with the dressing. Let stand at room temperature for 2 to 4 hours.

Cook the green beans in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 5 min. Drain and spread on paper towels to cool. When ready to serve, add the cooled green beans and then the basil to the white beans, tossing well after each addition. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed.

### **Black Bean & Corn Salad**

If you like spicy heat, leave the ribs of the chile intact; cut them out for less incendiary flavor. *Serves four.*

**1 cup dried black beans, well rinsed (soaked and drained, if you like)**

**2 bay leaves**

**1 small yellow onion, cut in half**

**Salt**

**1 cup fresh corn kernels or frozen corn, thawed**

**8 oz. small cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters, or 1 cup chopped tomatoes**

**½ cup thinly sliced scallions**

**1 small hot green chile, seeded and finely chopped**

**Freshly ground black pepper**

**2 Tbs. fresh lime juice**

**¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**¼ to ½ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro**

In a deep, heavy-based pot, cover the beans with 6 to 8 cups cold water. Add the bay leaves, onion, and ½ tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, skimming any foam that rises to the surface. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 75 min.; let cool in the broth. (Refrigerate the cooled beans in the broth if holding for more than a few hours; bring to room temperature before assembling the salad.)

Drain the beans, discarding the onion and bay leaves. In a serving bowl, combine the beans with the corn, tomatoes, scallions, and chile. In a small bowl, stir ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper into the lime juice and then add the olive oil, whisking to combine. Add this dressing and the cilantro to the bean mixture, stirring gently until well combined. Let sit for 15 min. Taste and add salt and pepper, if needed. Serve at room temperature.

*Jan Newberry, a former managing editor of Fine Cooking, is the food editor for San Francisco magazine. ♦*



**The husks will char, but the kernels will steam,** becoming tender and just lightly perfumed with smoke. Peel off all but one or two layers of husk.



# Grilled Corn on the Cob

A few minutes over a hot fire adds subtle smokiness, a perfect accent to today's super-sweet varieties of corn

BY LISA HANAUER

Certain things just taste like summer, and corn on the cob is one of them. Popular kitchen wisdom used to dictate that the way to cook corn on the cob was to set a large pot of water to boil, run out to the garden, pick the corn, shuck it on the way into the house, and plunge it, post haste, into the boiling water. But now with the sweeter varieties of corn readily available at farmers' markets and grocers, a less frenetic approach is possible. Whether white, yellow, or variegated (like Butter and Sugar), the new sugar-enhanced hybrids are not only much sweeter and crisper, but they also measure their loss of sugar in days instead of hours. This affords the corn-loving cook (me) the luxury of building a fire in a backyard grill and cooking the corn in the way that I think best takes advantage of the sweet crispness of the ears.



**Corn in the husk can take the heat,** so author Lisa Hanauer grills a batch of corn first, while the fire is still lively, and then grills her fish or meat once the coals have settled down.

## **The husks provide protection and flavor**

I prefer to grill the corn while still in its husk, silk and all. This method seems to steam the corn to perfection while giving it a slight smokiness that brings out the corn flavor. Some people recommend soaking the husks before grilling, but doing this keeps the husks from charring and eliminates the smoky flavor that I find so desirable.

Here's how to grill corn my way:

**Peel away the outer layers of husk.** If the ears have many layers of husk on them, I'll peel off the first few, leaving a few layers for protection, but allowing the kernels to see a little action.

**Use a lively fire.** I usually put the corn on the grill as soon as the initial flames from the charcoal (hardwood, not briquettes, please) die down and the coals



**Cutting kernels.** Cut the ear in half, stand it up, and slice down with a sharp knife, grazing the cob so that only the juiciest parts of the kernels are removed and the woody cores are left behind.

are still red-hot. This way, I take advantage of all those Btus while waiting for the coals to settle down to the perfect temperature at which to grill meat or fish. Corn protected by its husk is very forgiving, so if a few flames lick the ears and light the husks, don't worry. Take care, however, not to crowd the grill, which would choke off too much air to the coals.

**Keep turning those ears.** Grill the corn, turning often, until the first layer of husk is completely charred. Depending on your fire, this could take from around 5 to 10 minutes. You can push the corn to a cooler spot if you're grilling other things for your meal, or transfer the grilled corn to a platter and keep it warm in the charred husks until serving.

**Add a final kiss of smoke with the husks off.** Just before serving, I sometimes peel back the husk and brown the kernels on the grill, turning the corn frequently. You don't need to oil the corn for grilling directly like this, as it only takes a minute or so for it to develop a roasty color and a little additional smoke flavor. But if the corn spends too long on the grill without the protection of the husk, the kernels will become dry and a bit chewy.

To remove the corn from its husk, cut the stem end up to the bottom of the ear and peel back the husks and silk. You might need to brush away burnt silks. Now just dress the corn as you like: butter, olive oil, salt. I suggest my Lime-Cayenne Butter (at right).

Whether you eat it hot off the grill or in one of the ways suggested at right, grilled corn will enter your "taste memory bank" to epitomize the sweet taste of summer.

## While the coals are hot, grill a little extra corn, and then...

...cut the kernels from the cob to use in one of the delicious ways below, or in your own creation. If you don't use the corn immediately, store the cut kernels in an airtight, nonmetal container and use them by the next day.

- ◆ Fold grilled corn kernels into soft polenta, with or without cheese.
- ◆ Scatter grilled corn over a ripe tomato salad, along with thinly sliced onions, torn basil, and hot, crisped pancetta.
- ◆ Add grilled corn to a ratatouille of grilled late-summer vegetables, such as eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, onions, and zucchini.
- ◆ Mix grilled corn kernels into fresh salsa or add to quesadillas or fish tacos.
- ◆ Fold grilled corn, crisped pancetta, and snipped chives into an omelet.
- ◆ Add grilled corn to pasta with sautéed peppers, onions, garlic, sausages, and wilted mustard greens, along with a splash of red-wine vinegar.
- ◆ Wrap a crêpe around grilled corn, smoked trout fillets, *crème fraîche*, and sprigs of chervil.

*Lisa Hanauer is a former chef-restaurateur who now writes about food and teaches preschool. She lives in Oakland, California.* ◆

## Lime-Cayenne Butter

This tart and spicy butter really brings out the sweet, smoky flavors of the grilled corn. *Yields enough for 8 to 10 ears.*

**4 oz. (8 Tbs.)  
unsalted butter  
Juice of 1 lime  
1 tsp. coarse salt  
½ tsp. cayenne**

Melt the butter in a small saucepan and stir in the lime juice, salt, and cayenne. Brush lavishly on hot grilled corn.





# Gazpacho, Three Refreshing Variations on a Cool Classic

These chilled soups get their sparkle  
from olive oil, vinegar, bread, and garlic

BY LESLIE REVSIN

Photos except where noted: Sarah Jay

**W**hat's the most refreshing chilled soup for a scorching summer day? Even if you hadn't been primed by the headline, I'd bet my tomatoes that your answer is gazpacho.

And if it isn't, it ought to be. Gazpacho is cool, delicious, and invigorating, and you don't have to even approach the oven to make it. All you'll need are a handful of ripe tomatoes, green peppers, garlic, a hunk of yesterday's bread, and a generous splash of your favorite olive oil and vinegar. Purée everything in a food processor (or a blender, or use a cutting board and chop by hand), chill, and then ladle yourself a bowlful. Gazpacho is my summer tonic. It's exactly what I want—sometimes the *only* thing I want—when the weather has me wilting.

### **A diverse family of Spanish soups**

Actually, my favorite chilled summer soup is just one member of a large, loosely knit Spanish family of soups (including some that incorporate meat or fish and are served hot, but that's for another time).



**For a silken soup,** press puréed vegetables through a fine mesh sieve until only the fibers remain.

Of the cool versions, there are essentially three types: red, white, and green gazpacho. Each one starts with the same fundamental ingredients—bread, olive oil, vinegar, and garlic—but the addition of another element or two sends it trotting off in its own direction.

Tomatoes are the main ingredient in red gazpacho, with green or red bell peppers, cucumbers, and onions either puréed in as well or else scattered on top of the finished soup. White gazpachos, which are actually rather ivory in color, contain ground almonds, or perhaps pine nuts or even lima beans, and they're often garnished with grapes. It sounds a little strange, but once you try my delicate yet vibrant version (see the recipe on p. 51), you'll start craving it. Green gazpachos contain fresh herbs and perhaps

some shredded lettuce, but they're not very common, even in Spain.

### **First-rate vegetables produce vibrant flavor**

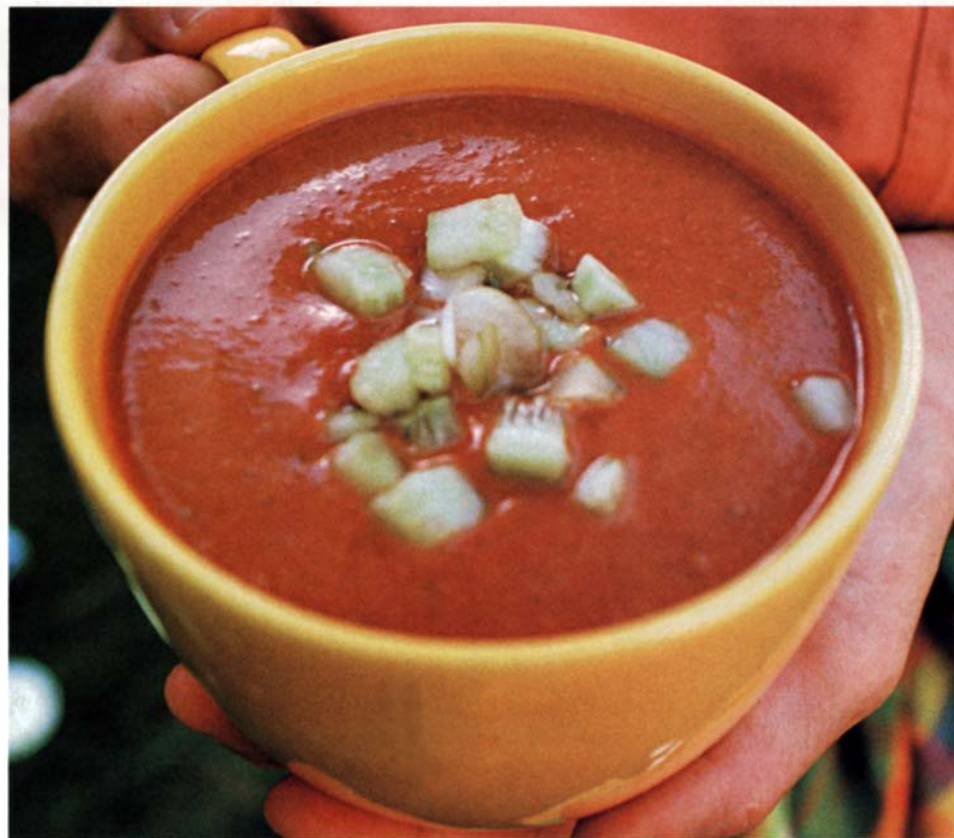
Some soups can recover from less-than-ideal ingredients, but gazpacho can't. The vegetables in gazpacho are generally raw and naked—there's no slow simmering to coax out sweetness and no cream or butter to mask flavor imperfections—so the soup they produce will reflect their freshness and quality.

So you can bet I'm vigilant about picking the ripest, juiciest tomatoes, the crispest cucumbers and peppers, and the greenest, liveliest herbs when I'm making gazpacho. I happily use one of my best extra-virgin olive oils. And I'll often use an authentic Spanish sherry vinegar (the traditional choice), though I might substitute red- or white-wine vinegar, or even lemon juice, depending on the version I'm making.

The only ingredient that doesn't have to be fresh is the bread. Day-old or older bread is actually better. I prefer a baguette or country-style loaf with lots of taste and character, with the crusts trimmed if they're especially thick or hard. You could also use unseasoned, fresh, homemade breadcrumbs.

### **Purée in a machine or chop by hand**

Originally, preparing gazpacho was a strenuous effort requiring a long mashing in a mortar. No doubt



**Served in a cup or glass and topped with cucumbers and onions,** gazpacho makes a bracing and filling summer beverage.



some purists in Spain still make gazpacho this way, and my hat's off to them, but I go the modern route and use a food processor or a blender. It's faster, easier, and there's no compromise in taste or texture.

With a machine, you can purée the ingredients to a lovely silken liquid in minutes or pulse them just long enough to get small pieces, giving the soup a more rustic, slightly coarser consistency. I like it both ways, but when I'm shooting for a smooth, intensely puréed gazpacho, I also strain it through a fine sieve to eliminate any tiny vegetable fibers. When I want the hearty kind I can get my teeth into, I chop the vegetables by hand or pulse them briefly in the processor until they're about pea-size (in this case, a



**A few short pulses in the food processor are all it takes to turn roasted red peppers and fresh tomatoes into a chunky, hearty, salsa-like gazpacho.**

processor chops more cleanly than a blender). Sometimes I purée a portion of the mixture and hand-chop the rest for a pleasing contrast.

You can serve the gazpacho as soon as it's made—just drop an ice cube or two in each bowl to chill it—but it's even better after a few hours in the fridge, not just because it's most satisfying when well chilled, but also because the flavors need time to meld and marry.

From the beginning, gazpacho was an improvised dish based on foods that were cheap and readily available. Now that it has grown roots in American soil, we can use our powers of reinvention, still staying true to its Mediterranean spirit. With that in mind, here are three recipes: one, the genuine Andalusian article, based on tomatoes and green peppers, and two more, both of them personalized riffs on red and white gazpacho. To me, they're new friends in familiar garb.

## Andalusian Gazpacho

I like straining this soup so it's absolutely smooth; if you'd rather not strain it, purée it more coarsely so the soup is chunky and tiny fibers aren't an issue. This recipe was adapted from Carmen Perujo, a home cook from Seville, who says that gazpacho used to be served as the penultimate course of the midday meal, "just before the fruit, which was always our dessert." Nowadays, it's often served as an appetizer. *Yields 4 cups; serves four.*

**2 cloves garlic, sliced**

**1 large green bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped (to yield 2 cups)**

**1½ lb. very red, ripe tomatoes (about 4 large), cut into large pieces**

**3-inch-long piece of baguette, sliced and dried overnight or until hard**

**½ cup good-quality extra-virgin olive oil**

**2 Tbs. sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar; more to taste**

**2 tsp. coarse salt; more to taste**

**Freshly ground black pepper (optional)**

**1 cup peeled, diced cucumber, for garnish**

**1 cup diced onion, for garnish (optional)**

Put the garlic, green pepper, tomatoes, bread, olive oil, vinegar, and salt in a food processor. Pulse until the ingredients begin to purée (if the bread is hard, it may bounce about and take a while to break down); continue processing until the mixture is as fine a purée as possible, 3 to 5 min.

Pass the soup through a large fine sieve set over a large bowl, pressing until only solids remain in the sieve; discard the solids. Stir in ¼ to ½ cup water, or enough to give the soup the consistency of a thin milkshake. If you want a thicker soup, add less water, or none at all. Add more salt or vinegar to taste. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled (or serve it immediately with a few ice cubes in each bowl).

Ladle the gazpacho into chilled bowls or cups. Grind fresh pepper on top, if you want, and pass bowls of diced cucumber and onion, if using, so people can garnish their own.

## Roasted Red Pepper & Tomato Gazpacho

Hearty and thick from chopped tomatoes, herbs, and roasted peppers (but not a speck of bread), this soup uses lemon juice instead of the traditional vinegar. It's almost as thick as a salsa; you can thin it with water if you like. *Yields 5 cups; serves four.*

**3 large red bell peppers, halved lengthwise and seeded**  
**2 lb. ripe tomatoes (about 6 medium), peeled, seeded, and chopped (to yield about 3 cups)**

**2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**

**⅓ cup good-quality extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed**

**¼ cup fresh lemon juice (from 1 to 2 lemons); more to taste**

**4 scallions (white and green parts), finely chopped**

**1 cup peeled, seeded, very finely diced cucumber (from 1 small)**

**½ cup chopped mixed herbs, such as basil, chervil, parsley, thyme, marjoram, and tarragon**



**Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste**

**¼ cup crumbled goat cheese (optional) or ⅓ cup cooked tiny shrimp or larger shrimp cut into bite-size pieces (optional)**

**To roast the peppers**—Set the broiler rack on the top rung and heat the broiler. Lightly oil a broiling pan. Set the pepper halves on the pan, cut side down, and flatten them with your palm. Broil until the skins blister and blacken, 10 to 15 min. Seal the peppers in a paper bag (or put them in a large bowl and cover it) so the peppers steam and the skins loosen.

When the peppers are cool enough to handle, peel away the blackened skin and discard it. (It helps to rinse your hands occasionally as you do this, but don't rinse the peppers or you'll dilute their flavor.)

**To make the gazpacho**—Put the peppers and tomatoes in a food processor and pulse to chop them finely (or use a knife). Put them into a large mixing bowl and stir in the garlic. Gradually stir in the olive oil to incorporate it. Add the lemon juice, scallions, cucumber, and all but 2 tsp. of the herbs (reserve these for the shrimp or goat cheese; if you're not adding either of these garnishes, mix in all the herbs now). Taste, season the soup well with salt and pepper, taste again, and add more drops of olive oil or lemon juice, if you like. Cover and chill.

If using the goat cheese, put it in a bowl and sprinkle generously with olive oil, the reserved fresh herbs, and pepper to taste; toss gently with a rubber spatula. If using the shrimp, put it in a bowl, moisten with olive oil, and add the reserved fresh herbs and salt and pepper to taste; toss with a rubber spatula.

Taste the gazpacho again and adjust the seasonings if necessary. Serve in chilled soup bowls, garnished with either the goat cheese or shrimp, if using, or just a little spoonful of olive oil floating on top.

### White Gazpacho

Cream-colored with a satisfyingly nubby texture, this version of white gazpacho looks lovely when garnished with red grape halves, green or purple basil, diced cucumber, and an ice cube or two.

*Yields 4 cups; serves four.*

**¾ cup fresh breadcrumbs, preferably white**

**¼ cup (1 oz.) slivered almonds, lightly toasted**

**1 to 2 large cloves garlic, sliced**

**⅔ cup roughly chopped green bell pepper**

**1½ cups peeled, seeded, and sliced cucumber, plus 4 tsp. finely diced for garnish**

**¼ cup lightly packed basil leaves, plus 2 to 3 Tbs. torn leaves for garnish**

**3 Tbs. white-wine vinegar**

**½ cup good-quality extra-virgin olive oil**

**Salt and freshly ground pepper (preferably white) to taste**

**4 ice cubes, for serving**

**10 to 12 red or green seedless grapes, halved, for garnish**

Put the bread crumbs in a small mixing bowl and stir in ⅓ cup cold water to moisten them. Set aside to let the breadcrumbs absorb the water, about 10 min.

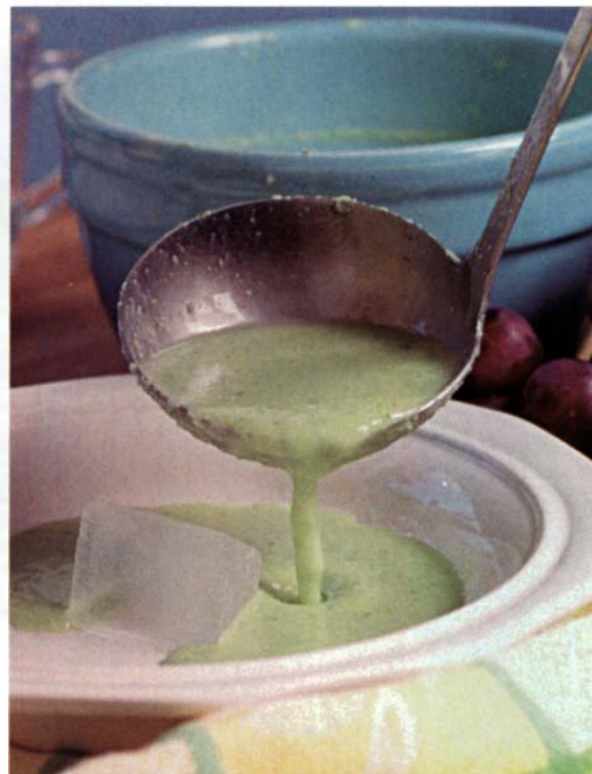
Put the almonds and garlic in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Add the moistened



**White gazpacho gets its bright herby flavor from green peppers, cucumbers, and fresh basil, which are processed to a fine, smooth purée.**



**Add a hefty hit of your best extra-virgin olive oil for body and flavor.**



**Serve white gazpacho on the rocks, with a garnish of grape halves for a cooling, tart finish.**

breadcrumbs. Pulse for a moment to mix and then add the green pepper, the sliced cucumber, the ¼ cup basil, and the vinegar. Process for several minutes until the mixture is as finely puréed as possible. With the machine running, gradually add the olive oil.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and stir in 1¼ to 1½ cups cold water (use ice water if serving immediately). Season with salt and pepper and chill for several hours or overnight. Before serving, taste and add more salt and pepper, if necessary.

For each serving, put an ice cube in a chilled soup bowl and ladle in the gazpacho. Garnish with the diced cucumber, grape halves, and torn basil leaves.

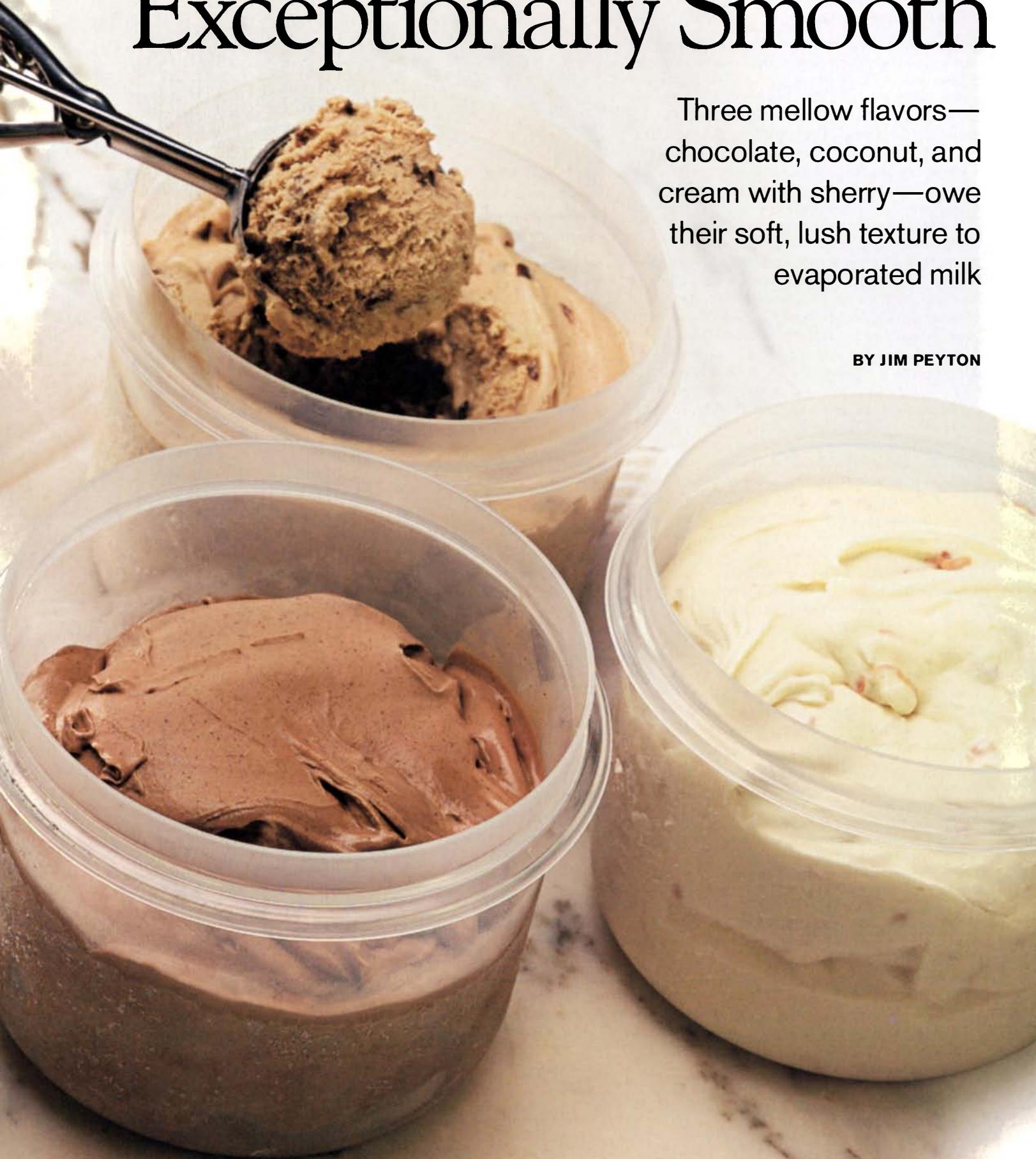
*Leslie Revsin was the chef-owner of Restaurant Leslie in New York City, a tiny, hole-in-the-wall bistro, and was the first woman chef at the Waldorf=Astoria. ♦*



# Exceptionally Smooth

Three mellow flavors—chocolate, coconut, and cream with sherry—owe their soft, lush texture to evaporated milk

BY JIM PEYTON



# Homemade Ice Cream

I've always found that I appreciate a new dish much more when I know a little about its roots. But the first time I tried the ice cream called *crema morisca* in the square of the old walled city of Campeche in Mexico, I realized that this was a dessert that needed no help from history. Its subtle flavors drew me in—dried plums, vanilla, a hint of sweet sherry, and something richer than cream—but its exceptional texture was what won me over. It was soft, velvety, and perfectly smooth.

After sampling that ice cream and then finding a recipe for it in a regional cookbook, I began to pay more attention to Mexico's other versions of the frozen treat that may be the world's favorite indulgence. What I discovered was something that I should have known all along: that Mexican cooks have applied the same ingenuity to making ice cream that they have to every other aspect of their cuisine.

## Evaporated milk for super-creamy texture

Historically, cooks in Mexico have had to overcome considerable challenges in the kitchen, including a shortage of refrigeration. As a result, evaporated milk is used in recipes where we would use fresh milk and cream. This substitution happens to work extremely well in ice cream. Evaporated milk has a high concentration of milk solids, and this gives a richness and smoothness to ice cream (see Food Science, p. 78, for an explanation).

Of course, these ice cream recipes do include some heavy cream and milk, too, but it's the addition of evaporated milk that gives them such a creamy, custardy texture.

I don't know how cornstarch found its way into Mexican ice cream, but its presence makes sense. Cornstarch lets the custard base thicken with fewer egg yolks (which means fewer calories and less saturated fat). It also helps protect against curdled eggs so the custard can be cooked over direct heat—rather than in a double boiler—without the usual worry that you'll end up with scrambled eggs.

The chocolate ice cream calls for two unusual ingredients: Mexican chocolate and *cajeta*. Mexican chocolate is sweeter than most and flavored with cinnamon and often with ground almonds. *Cajeta* (pronounced kah-HAY-tah), sometimes called *leche quemada* ("burned milk"), is nothing more than milk

(usually goat's milk) simmered with sugar and perhaps vanilla, until it's syrupy thick and golden brown. In Mexico, *cajeta* is used as a dessert topping, a crêpe filling, in candies, or anywhere else that a rich, creamy, sweet flavor with considerable depth is desired. Look for Mexican chocolate and *cajeta* in Mexican markets or order it by mail (see Sources, p. 80). The homemade version of *cajeta* that I suggest here (see p. 55) is a fast and easy substitute.

## A well-chilled custard base for a faster freeze

Other than the innovations mentioned above, these ice creams follow the same method as most others: make a custard base, cook it until it thickens, chill it, and spin it in an ice-cream machine until frozen.

Cooking the base does two things: it heats the milk (essential for a smooth texture), and it eradicates any concerns about salmonella in the eggs (the bacteria can't survive above 160°F). To avoid overcooking the custard, take the following precautions:

- ◆ **Add the milk to the egg yolks gradually.** Adding eggs abruptly to a very hot mixture can cause them to curdle. To increase their temperature gradually, whisk a bit of the hot liquid into the yolks before mixing them into the rest of the hot mixture, a process called tempering.

- ◆ **When the custard is ready, stop the cooking.** As the custard nears 180°F, it begins to thicken very quickly. To halt the cooking, remove the pot from the heat and mix in the remaining ingredients, which should be chilled.

You could set up an ice bath to cool the custard even faster, but it's an extra step that's easily omitted. Even if a few specks of cooked egg are in the custard, it isn't the end of the world: you'll be straining the mixture before chilling it.

I've had great results by refrigerating the custard base for as little as two hours or for as long as 24 hours before pouring it into an ice-cream machine. Just keep in mind that the colder the base is, the quicker and easier it will freeze.







**Gradually whisking hot milk means no lumps from curdled eggs.**



**Using a thermometer allows more control over the custard, which can thicken quickly.**



**Straining guarantees smoothness.** Pass the custard through a fine sieve to remove any cooked egg and ensure perfect texture.

## Chocolate Ice Cream with Cinnamon & Cajeta

This chocolate ice cream has a distinctive, almost roasty flavor. You can substitute semisweet chocolate for the Mexican chocolate, increasing the sugar to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup and adding a scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon (preferably Ceylon) along with the chocolate. If you can't find *cajeta*, make your own as shown at right. *Yields about 1 quart.*

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups milk
- 7 oz. Mexican chocolate, coarsely chopped (I use Ibarra)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup *cajeta*
- 3 large egg yolks
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chilled evaporated milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chilled whipping or heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coarsely chopped pecans (optional)



In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually stir in the milk over medium heat and add the chocolate, whisking often until the chocolate has melted and the milk is hot and just about to simmer, about 5 min. Add the *cajeta* and whisk until it melts, 1 to 2 min. Remove from the heat.

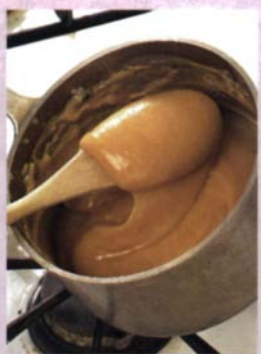
In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks until blended, about 30 seconds. Whisk about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the hot milk-chocolate mixture into the yolks and then beat in another  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. Slowly whisk in the remaining hot liquid and then pour the mixture back into the pan. Heat the mixture over medium to medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until it reaches 180°F and begins to



**After churning, freeze for a few hours.** The ice cream will firm up but still remain scoopable.

## Make your own cajeta

In a saucepan, combine one can of sweetened condensed milk (14 or 14½ ounces) with ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract. Simmer very gently, stirring frequently, until very thick and golden brown (it may get lumpy but will eventually smooth out), about 20 minutes. The *cajeta* keeps in the refrigerator for at least a week. Yields 1 cup.



thicken; it will look like it's about to boil. Remove from the heat and whisk in the evaporated milk and cream, whisking until the mixture begins to cool. Strain to remove any cooked pieces of egg and refrigerate until it's colder than about 60°F, at least 2 hours or as long as 24 hours, stirring occasionally.

Add the pecans, if using, and freeze the mixture in an ice-cream machine (following the maker's instructions) until the ice cream is very thick and cold. Transfer to a resealable plastic or stainless-steel container and freeze until firm enough to scoop, at least 3 hours.

## Toasted Coconut Ice Cream

Even when fully frozen, this very coconutty ice cream remains soft and looks almost sticky. Coconut flakes go from toasted to burnt quite fast, so keep an eye on them. Yields about 1¼ quarts.

- 1 cup sugar
- 2½ tsp. cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup milk
- ¾ cup whipping or heavy cream
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ cup chilled evaporated milk
- 1 cup chilled unsweetened canned coconut milk
- ¼ cup sweetened coconut flakes, toasted; more for garnish (optional)



In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually stir or whisk in the milk and cream, bring to a boil, and then reduce the heat to a simmer for 1 min. Remove the pan from the heat.

In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks until blended, about 30 seconds. Whisk about ½ cup of the hot milk-cream mixture into the yolks and then beat in another ½ cup. Slowly whisk in the remaining hot liquid and then pour the mixture back into the pan. Heat the mixture over medium to medium-high heat until it reaches 180°F and begins to thicken, stirring constantly; it will look like it's about to boil. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the evaporated milk

and coconut milk, whisking until the mixture begins to cool. Strain to remove any cooked pieces of egg and refrigerate until it's colder than about 60°F, at least 2 hours or as long as 24 hours, stirring occasionally.

Add ¼ cup of the coconut flakes, if using, and freeze the mixture in an ice-cream machine (following the maker's instructions) until the ice cream is very thick and cold. Transfer to a resealable plastic or stainless-steel container and freeze until it's firm enough to scoop, at least 3 hours. Serve with toasted coconut flakes sprinkled on top, if you like.

## Crema Morisca (Moorish Ice Cream with Sherry & Prunes)

I tried this terrific ice cream in Campeche and was fortunate enough to find a recipe for it in the *Guía Gastronomía* series (published several years ago by the magazine *México Desconocido*) that I used as a starting point for my own. Don't let the prunes put you off. If you like rum raisin ice cream, you'll love this. Yields about 1¼ quarts.

- 1 cup sugar
- 2½ tsp. cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- 1¼ cups milk
- ½ cup sweet or medium sherry (not dry)
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ cup chilled evaporated milk
- ¾ cup chilled whipping or heavy cream
- ¾ tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup prunes, soaked in hot water for 1 hour, drained, patted dry, and finely chopped
- ⅓ cup (1¼ oz.) coarsely chopped walnuts (optional)

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually stir or whisk in the milk, bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Add the sherry, continue simmering for 1 min., and then remove the pan from the heat.

In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks until blended, about 30 seconds. Whisk about ½ cup of the hot milk-sherry mixture into the yolks and then whisk in another ½ cup. Slowly whisk in the remaining hot liquid and then pour the mixture back into the pan. Heat the mixture on medium to medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until it reaches 180°F and just begins to thicken; it will look like it's about to boil. Remove from the heat and whisk in the evaporated milk, cream, and vanilla, whisking until the mixture begins to cool. Strain to remove any cooked pieces of egg and refrigerate until it's colder than about 60°F, at least 2 hours or as long as 24 hours, stirring occasionally.

Add the prunes and walnuts, if using, and freeze the mixture in an ice-cream machine (following the maker's instructions) until the ice cream is very thick and cold. Transfer to a resealable plastic or stainless-steel container and freeze until it's firm enough to scoop, at least 3 hours.



*Jim Peyton is the author of three Mexican cookbooks, including Jim Peyton's New Cooking from Old Mexico (Consortium). ♦*

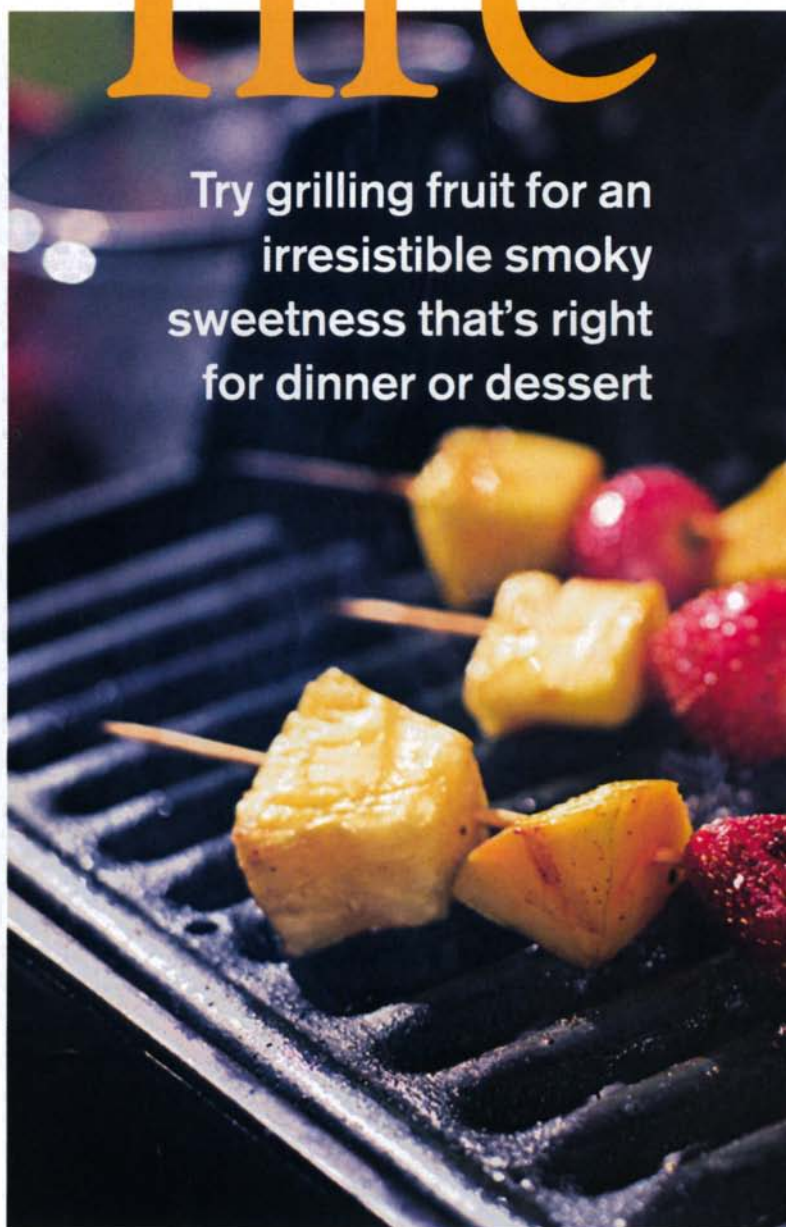




**"You can cook these kebabs inside, but who would want to?"** asks Bill Briwa. On a less gorgeous day, you can sear fruit on a grill pan or cook it under the broiler.

# Cooking Fruit with fire

Try grilling fruit for an irresistible smoky sweetness that's right for dinner or dessert





BY BILL BRIWA

**M**y wife swoons at the thought of warm fruit and often warms her winter tangerines by the heater before eating them to enhance their flavor. The heat brings out the flavor of the fruit and softens its texture. In the summer, I grill fruit for the same reasons plus this one: caramelization.

**As the fruit sits, the fire works its magic—caramelizing sugars for a toasty-sweet flavor.**

Learn to cook and sooner or later you'll hear about the wonders of this phenomenon: the sugars in foods like fruit, when heated, take on a beautiful golden color and develop a deep, caramel-like flavor. The toasty, sweet, caramelized exterior of the fruit

contrasts with the soft, often tart flesh inside, creating a completely new flavor that's simply delicious.

**A gas grill is convenient; a wood fire adds toasty flavor**

A gas grill is the easiest to use because you can shut down the grill after the main course and fire it up again at your leisure for dessert. If you're using a charcoal grill, you'll want to time your dessert so that the coals are hot enough for another round of cooking, usually within half an hour or so. To keep the coals going, shut the vents almost completely after dinner to reduce the air circulation that makes the fire burn out more quickly. Then open the air vents to stoke the heat before grilling the fruit for dessert.

If you're grilling fruit as an appetizer or main course, such as the grilled figs with pancetta or the pork and grapes (see the recipes on pp. 58–59), a wood fire will give you the most aromatic smoke.

**Clean the grate and heat it before grilling any fruit.** Use a wire brush to get rid of any of the remains from dinner—the one you just grilled or the one you grilled last week—otherwise, your grilled peaches may wind up tasting a lot like your grilled salmon. A dirty grill can also cause the fruit to stick.

Other ways to prevent sticking is to heat the grate before putting on the fruit and to lightly brush the grate with a little oil for fruit that's not marinated.

**Cook with moderately high heat.** A fire that's too hot will quickly burn the sugars, resulting in a bitter, unpleasant flavor. Check the heat by holding your palm about two inches above the grate; if you can hold it there for three seconds but no more, you have a medium-hot fire, good for grilling most fruits.

**Just-ripe fruits grill best**

Perfectly lush ripe fruit, whose juices dribble down your chin when you bite, should be savored in their natural state. On the grill, they'll just make you curse as they turn to mush and, in the case of kebabs, fall off at the least provocation. Fruit that's just barely ripe, meaning it has a lovely perfume and is just starting to soften, is better for grilling. Bananas should have a pure yellow skin. Pears, mangos, figs, and peaches should not dent when you pick them up but should give when pressed firmly. (With pineapples and citrus fruits, you just have to assume they were picked ripe.) Occasionally, unripe fruit works best. Green mangos become crunchy and tangy when grilled.

**Adding flavor to the fruit.** I often rub spices on fruits and marinate them before grilling. The spices are purely for flavor, but the marinade serves other purposes as well. If there is some fat in the marinade, such as melted butter, it can help prevent sticking, as well as add richness of flavor. A marinade also keeps







**Make room for the goat cheese.** Hollow a split fig with your thumb and then add a teaspoon of filling.



**Wrap up the figs, but not too tightly.** Be sure the pancetta is very thinly sliced so it stays on the fig and cooks before the fruit and filling become too mushy.

fruit juicy and will keep cut fruit from turning brown before it hits the grill. If there's sugar in the marinade, it will help the fruit brown once it's on the grill. Another way to promote browning is to dust the fruit with confectioners' sugar just before grilling.

**Leave the fruit alone for a minute.** Once on the grill, let the fruit stay in one place for at least a minute to color and sear. Check the underside of the fruit; when it's golden with mahogany grill marks—turn the fruit over to finish cooking.

Because there are no safety issues with undercooking fruit (as there could be with meat), there are no crucial doneness tests, but do be sure the fruit has softened without becoming mushy and that it has taken on some nice color.

**Grapes are great on the grill.** Paired with pork, grapes add moistness to the dish with their warm juices.



**Smoky, salty, creamy, and sweet**—this fig appetizer has it all.

## RECIPES

### Spicy Grilled Pork & Grape Kebabs

This recipe, adapted from the Wine Spectator Grey-stone Restaurant, is based on traditional *tapas* from Spain. The spice rub that's used in this recipe can also be used to flavor grilled vegetables and other meats, especially chicken. *Serves four as an appetizer; two as a main course.*

- 1½ tsp. curry powder
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground paprika
- ¼ tsp. ground coriander
- ⅛ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 Tbs. orange juice
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 lb. pork tenderloin, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- ¼ lb. large, firm, seedless grapes, such as the Flame variety
- 1 to 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Salt to taste

Combine the curry powder, cumin, paprika, coriander, and cinnamon; store airtight until ready to use. In a small bowl, mix the olive oil, orange juice, and garlic. Thread the pork onto skewers alternately with the grapes. Sprinkle the spice rub all over the kebabs and then pour the marinade over all. Marinate, refrigerated, for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day, turning occasionally. Grill the kebabs over a hot fire until the pork is cooked through but still moist, 8 to 10 min. Stack the kebabs on a serving platter and sprinkle with the parsley and salt.

## Grilled Figs with Goat Cheese & Mint

Pancetta is cured Italian bacon; unlike American bacon, it isn't smoked. You'll find it at specialty stores, Italian markets, and some supermarkets. Don't use American bacon: it takes too long to crisp on the grill. *Serves four.*

**½ cup (3½ to 4 oz.) soft fresh goat cheese**

**2 Tbs. fresh breadcrumbs**

**About 6 mint leaves, stacked, rolled into a cylinder, and cut into thin strips**

**1 Tbs. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**12 fresh Mission figs**

**12 very thin slices pancetta (⅛ inch or less)**

**1 Tbs. honey**

**½ tsp. very finely chopped fresh thyme (optional)**

In a small bowl, combine the goat cheese, breadcrumbs, mint, and parsley; season with salt and pepper. Cut the figs nearly in half lengthwise, keeping them attached at the broad end. Hollow the center slightly with your thumb. Stuff each fig with about 1 tsp. of the goat cheese mixture and squeeze very gently to close.

Wrap a slice of pancetta around each fig, overlapping with each revolution. Don't wrap the pancetta too tightly or you'll force the filling out or cause the figs to split. Cover the figs with plastic wrap and refrigerate (up to 1 day ahead) until ready to grill.

Grill the figs over a moderately hot fire to crisp the pancetta and to warm the figs and cheese, 8 to 10 min. Transfer the figs to a serving dish. Combine the honey and thyme, if using, and drizzle over the figs. Serve with good, crusty bread.

## Grilled Mixed Fruits with Island Spices & Dark Rum

You can make this with just about any kind of fruit: try a mix of any of the ones below, as well as cherries, peaches, bananas, nectarines, and grapes. To keep the fruit from spinning on the skewer, you can use two skewers side by side. *Serves four.*

**¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**

**¼ tsp. ground allspice**

**⅛ tsp. ground ginger**

**Pinch ground nutmeg**

**Pinch ground cloves**

**½ cup dark rum**

**1 Tbs. brown sugar**

**½ Tbs. honey**

**2 Tbs. pineapple juice (canned is fine)**

**Juice from ½ lime**

**1 medium pineapple, peeled, eyes removed, and cored**

**6 oz. ripe but firm strawberries, hulled**

**3 ripe but firm mangos, pitted and peeled (see the recipe at right for pitting directions)**

**3 kiwis, peeled**

**½ cup confectioners' sugar**

Combine the cinnamon, allspice, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves; store airtight until ready to use. In a small bowl, combine the rum, brown sugar, honey, pineapple juice, and lime juice; set aside.

Leave small fruits, such as strawberries, whole; cut others into 1- to 1½-inch cubes. Thread the fruit on skewers, alternating contrasting colors. Sprinkle the

spices over the kebabs. Shortly before grilling, baste the kebabs with half of the rum marinade and dust generously with confectioners' sugar to promote caramelization. Grill over a moderately hot fire until the fruit begins to show grill marks. Turn and continue to grill until the fruit has softened and browned nicely. Take care not to burn the strawberries. Drizzle the remaining marinade over the kebabs and serve immediately.

## Thai Grilled Green Mango

You'll find green mangos, lemongrass, and fish sauce at Asian grocery stores and some supermarkets. Look for unripe mangos that are still very firm. *Serves four as an appetizer.*

**2 fresh Thai bird chiles or other small hot chiles, seeded and minced**

**1½ Tbs. fish sauce**

**1½ tsp. water**

**1 Tbs. very finely chopped lemongrass (peel away the outer layer and use only the bulbous part at the end)**



**1 Tbs. brown sugar**

**3 to 4 green (unripe) mangos**

**2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro**

**About 8 mint leaves and 10 basil leaves, each stacked, rolled into a cylinder, and cut into thin strips**

Mix together the chiles, fish sauce, water, lemongrass, and brown sugar. Pit each mango by holding it with the narrow side up and cutting through on each side of the large, flat, central pit to give you two big pitless pieces. With a sharp knife, peel these pieces and cut them into spears about 3 inches long and 1 inch thick. Peel the skin from the remaining pit section and cut the flesh near the pit into spears, if possible. (You can peel the mangos before slicing, but they become quite slippery.) Pour the marinade over the mangos and toss to coat. Let marinate for at least 20 min. but not more than 1 hour. Have ready

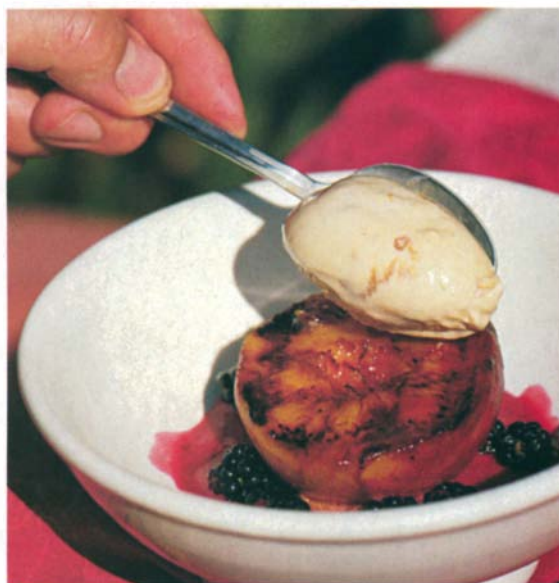
**Perfect finger food.** Crisp and tangy, these grilled mango spears are unusual but incredibly delicious.





**Nectarine halves dipped in butter get grilled until softened and caramelized.**

Note that the other side has been sliced flat to keep the fruit from rolling around once it's on the serving plate.



**The warm fruit will melt the ice cream, so serve this dish quickly.** The blackberry coulis adds a nice tart note to the plate.

a moderately hot fire. Grill the fruit to soften its texture, letting it brown slightly, about 2 min. per side. When cooked, transfer it to a platter, pour any remaining marinade over the mangos, and sprinkle with the cilantro, mint, and basil. Serve warm as an appetizer with your favorite beer.

### **Grilled Nectarines with Blackberries & Ice Cream**

I just love this with caramel-flavored ice cream, but vanilla is also delicious. *Serves eight.*

**2 pints blackberries**  
 **$\frac{1}{3}$  cup water**  
**1 tsp. fresh lemon juice; more to taste**  
**Sugar to taste**  
**2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**  
**2 Tbs. honey**  
 **$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground cinnamon**  
**4 large, ripe nectarines**  
**Caramel or vanilla ice cream**  
**Crisp butter cookies and fresh mint sprigs (optional)**

In a blender, mix 1 of the pints of blackberries with the water and lemon juice. Purée until smooth. Pass the purée through a fine sieve, pressing down with the back of a ladle. Adjust the flavor with either more lemon juice or a little sugar. Reserve this coulis.

Heat the grill to medium high. In a shallow bowl or lipped plate, stir together the melted butter, honey, and cinnamon. Cut each nectarine in half and remove the pit. Slice a bit off of the side opposite the pit so that the fruit will lay flat when serving. Roll each half in the melted butter mixture. Grill, pit side down, until the fruit is softened and the pit side begins to darken and caramelize, about 4 min.

Put a nectarine half (pit side up) at the center of each plate. Drizzle some of the coulis around the fruit and sprinkle with the fresh blackberries. Top each nectarine while still warm with a scoop of ice cream. Garnish with a crisp butter cookie and a sprig of fresh mint, if you like. Serve immediately, while the ice cream begins to soften but before it melts.

*Bill Briwa is a chef-instructor at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in St. Helena, California. ♦*

## **Try other fruits on the grill**

These fruits are also great grilled: **Apples**—Sprinkle a halved and cored apple with some cinnamon. Marinate it in some apple brandy. Brush with melted butter and grill until softened. Serve with good vanilla ice cream and crisp butter cookies.

**Pears**—Sprinkle halved and cored pears with salt, pepper, and a little sugar. Brush them with butter and grill until softened. Add them to a salad of greens, walnuts, and blue

cheese and dress with a sherry vinaigrette.

**Bananas**—Roll a whole, firm banana or skewered slices in melted butter and dust with sweet spices, such as cinnamon and cloves, before grilling. Serve with toasted pecans, sweetened whipped cream, and a drizzle of honey.

**Dried apricots**—Larger dried fruits, like apricots, figs, and prunes, benefit from the warmth of the grill.

Serve with some fresh fruits, nuts, and a great selection of cheeses.

**Grapefruit**—If you like grapefruit broiled, you'll love it grilled. Cut it in half, sprinkle with sugar, and grill cut side down. Drizzle on some Chambord for an after-dinner treat.

**Papayas**—For a great breakfast treat, grill half a papaya brushed with a little honey. Squeeze a bit of lime over it all before serving.

# Hot-Smoking Your Own Salmon

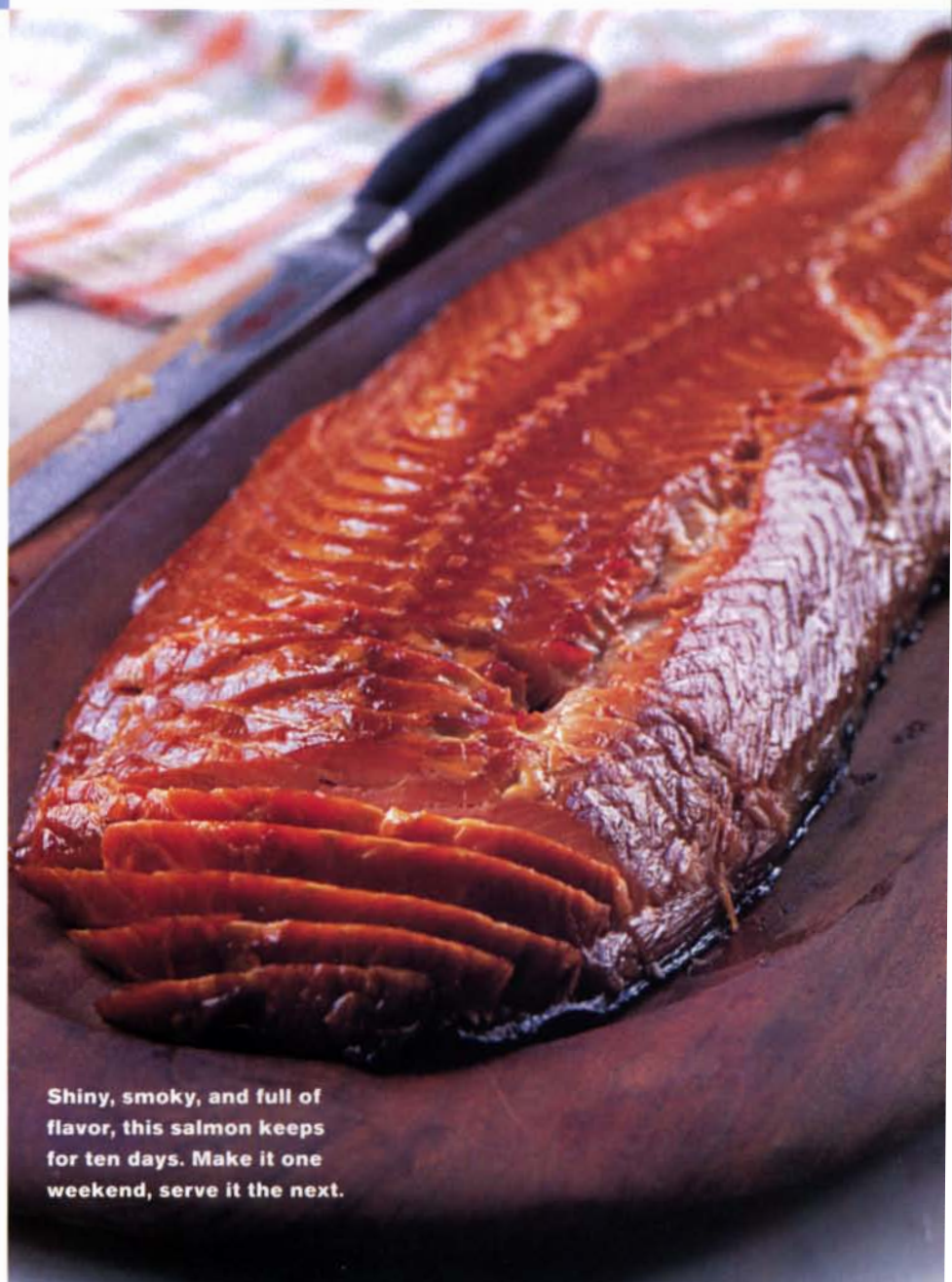
A fun summer project that gives you salmon with a fabulous smoky flavor and a superb texture

BY ED STARBIRD

I was first introduced to hot-smoked fish almost fifty years ago. When I was a kid, my father made business trips to Key West from our home in Coral Gables, Florida. If he could, he would take me along for some fishing on the return trip. We didn't smoke the fish we caught, but my dad would buy some hot-smoked mullet from a nearby smokehouse, and we'd nibble on it during a long day of fishing.

What little smoked fish I ate in the years after those days seemed inferior to the brown-paper-wrapped fish my dad and I shared. Then, about fifteen years ago, I gave a neighbor some freshly caught bluefish. Three days later, he returned with one of the fillets that he'd cured and smoked. It was terrific. He generously shared his smoking methods with me, and since then I've been smoking fish for myself and for friends.

Smoking salmon sounds intimidating, but it's something anybody can do in the backyard. It takes some specialized equipment—you'll need to rig up a smoker, for instance—and the way I do it, it's a long process, two to three days. But the time that you're actively involved is minimal. The brine—a mixture of salt, sugar, and water—is ready in minutes. And if I can find someone to give the salmon a few turns while it's in the brine, I'm off to the golf course. The same is true for the actual smoking; setting up the smoker and getting the fish ready doesn't take long, and then it's just periodic visits to check on the heat or to add chips for smoke.



Shiny, smoky, and full of flavor, this salmon keeps for ten days. Make it one weekend, serve it the next.



**Pull out the pin bones at an angle to least disturb the flesh. Stubby, flat-nosed pliers work best because they grab onto the bones with their ridged surface.**



### **Hot-smoking gives you full-flavored, fully cooked fish**

There are two distinct types of smoked salmon: hot and cold. This doesn't refer to the temperature at which the fish is served; it refers to the temperature of the smokehouse or oven. Both styles begin with fresh salmon and go through a three-part process: curing, drying, and smoking. Cold-smoked salmon is rarely, if ever, heated higher than 90°F, which results in a soft, pliable texture. Hot-smoked salmon is actually cooked at temperatures that get as high as 160°F in my recipe, higher in other recipes. Hot-smoked salmon has a full, smoky flavor and a firmer texture than cold-smoked salmon.

### **Controlling the heat is the key to smoking**

The key to successful smoking is the ability to control the heat of the smokehouse over a long period of time. While you can smoke salmon using a wood-burning or charcoal-burning smoker, maintaining a very low and steady temperature for the eight to ten hours is extremely difficult. (For more information on smokers in general, see p. 66.) That's why I recommend smoking fish using an electric heat source.

I've owned small box-shaped electric smokers (the Little Chief brand) that did an adequate job. For more control, I replaced the simple heating element that came with the Little Chief with a small, high-wattage, single-burner hotplate, on which I burned the wood chips in a cast-iron skillet.

Char-Broil makes one of the few electric smokers that come with an adjustable thermostat, but it's hard to get much smoke from this smoker at the very low temperature required for the salmon.

If you're really serious about smoking your own salmon, do what I did and build your own electric smoker. The one I built from a used oven gave me enough rack space to smoke six whole fillets at a time (see p. 65 for directions).

Another less permanent option is to rig an electric smoker using a kettle grill and a hotplate (see p. 65 for directions). This set-up can give you deliciously smoked salmon, but to get at your chip pan to dump the ashes and refresh the wood chips, you'll need to remove the rack that the salmon is on. On a cool day, this will slow down your smoking

considerably. Also, you can only smoke one whole salmon fillet at a time (which is probably plenty to start with, anyway).

Finally, if your only option is to smoke with a fire, or a nonadjustable electric smoker, you may want to try smoking your salmon at a higher temperature for a shorter duration. Obviously, I prefer my method: starting off at about 100°F in the smokehouse and gradually increasing the temperature until it hovers between 150° and 160°F during the last hour. This long, low smoking gives the salmon time to absorb the smoke and results in a wonderful texture. But there are some recipes that suggest smoking the salmon at anywhere between 180° and 200°F. (You'll learn by experimenting.)

### **Start with fresh salmon**

The process for hot-smoking begins with buying fresh salmon. Finding fresh salmon, whole or fillets,

#### **Brine "Recipe"**

My brine recipe is simple: coarse salt, dark brown sugar, and water. I use a ratio based on volume: the sugar and salt are on a one-to-one ratio. Combined, they're one-to-six to the water.

#### **FOR ONE WHOLE SALMON FILLET:**

**1 cup coarse salt**  
**1 cup loosely packed dark brown sugar**  
**3 quarts water**

#### **FOR TWO WHOLE FILLETS:**

**1 ½ cups coarse salt**  
**1 ½ cups loosely packed dark brown sugar**  
**4 ½ quarts water**

#### **FOR THREE TO FOUR WHOLE SALMON FILLETS:**

**3 cups coarse salt**  
**3 cups loosely packed dark brown sugar**  
**9 quarts water**

shouldn't be difficult, but you can mail-order it if necessary (see Sources, p. 80).

**If you have a sharp filleting knife, consider filleting the salmon yourself.** When someone offers to fillet my salmon, I decline politely; too often the result is a battered fillet. With the right knife, filleting a salmon isn't difficult (for instructions, visit [www.finecooking.com](http://www.finecooking.com)). If you buy an already filleted salmon, try to get a piece that has *not* had the pin bones (those small bones that run the length of the fish) removed. Often their hasty removal breaks the flesh of the fish. You can easily feel the bones—about 20 to 25 of them on each fillet—by running your fingers along the flesh (which you should do even if you bought filleted salmon to be sure the fishmonger got all of them). Remove them with clean pliers.



works nicely, but if longer soaking suits your schedule, you can let it stay in the brine for up to ten hours.

The salmon needs to be chilled as it soaks. If you don't have room in your fridge, try this trick: make some extra brine, freeze it in an ice-cube tray, and add the cubes to your brine as it warms to keep the temperature down. Turn the salmon a couple of times in the brine; fillets float, and you want to be sure all sides get exposure.

**Dry the salmon completely.** Once brined, the salmon must be thoroughly rinsed and dried. Rinse the fillets under cold water and dry them with paper towels. Arrange them on a rack, skin side down, and refrigerate them until a subtle glaze—called a pelicle—covers the flesh side of the fish. The pelicle makes the fillet appear a little darker and a little drier. But it's not easy to see, so even though this initial drying can take as

**Leave the scales on or off.** Leaving the scales on seems to bond the skin more strongly to the flesh, making the fillets easier to remove from the grill and slice. The flavor won't be affected if your salmon has had its scales removed; however, its skin may stick to the cooking rack.

**Brining is easy—the fillets need only an occasional turn. A large stainless pan holds four fillets. A large nonreactive roasting pan works, too.**

Once your smoker is rigged and your salmon is filleted, you're ready to roll. Refer to the box on brining at left and read over the directions that follow, beginning at Day 1.

### Day 1: Brine for flavor and texture

There are two methods of curing salmon, wet and dry. For dry curing, you smother the fish in salt and then wash off the excess after a long exposure. Wet curing means adding the fish to a bath of water, salt, and sugar. I use equal parts kosher salt and dark brown sugar and then use a one-to-six ratio of the dry ingredients to the water (see the box at left for suggested amounts).

To hold a whole fillet and the brine, you'll need a large, nonreactive container. You can cut the salmon fillets into pieces (which you may need to do if your smoker can't handle a whole fillet). Cutting the fish doesn't affect flavor, but pieces don't look quite as impressive as a whole fillet. If your smoker won't hold a whole fillet, cut the salmon into pieces *before* curing it; after drying off from its brine bath, the fish is more fragile than ever, and overhandling can create unsightly gaps in the flesh.

**Soak for at least six hours, turning occasionally.** I've found that six hours of brining salmon



little as a few hours, I refrigerate the salmon overnight so I can be sure the glaze has formed and can get an early start on smoking the next morning.

### Day 2: Smoke over low heat

On the day of smoking, you'll need to have a few pieces of equipment handy: the smoker, of course, and the following:

♦ **Hardwood chips.** Hardwood chips are easy to use and they impart a subtle flavor. Over the years, I've

**The fillets dry in the fridge while you sleep. A light glaze, called the pelicle, means the fish is sufficiently dried. It's hard to see, but the fillet in front has been dried.**



used just about all the hardwoods and, frankly, neither I nor anyone else who eats my smoked salmon has detected a difference in the flavor. Alder is the traditional wood used in the Pacific Northwest for smoking salmon, and I generally use hickory, but apple, oak, maple, and pecan are other good options. Mesquite burns too hot and fast for this low smoking. Whichever kind you decide on, you'll need about eight cups of chips.



**These chips plus heat make the salmon smokily delicious. Choose your favorite hardwood but avoid mesquite, which burns too fast and too hot.**



**If you're going to spend ten hours smoking fish, you might as well smoke a lot of it. Ed's customized oven holds up to six whole salmon fillets—which makes his friends very happy.**

♦ **Two thermometers:** an oven or a candy thermometer, and an instant-read. To control this low, slow smoking, you must take temperature readings in the cooking area as close to the fish as possible. An oven thermometer or a metal-housed candy thermometer inside the smoker next to the fish will work, but you'll need to open the lid to check the temperature, which will make smoking take longer. If you can rig a candy thermometer so it stays in the vent over the fish, you can pull it out to check it without opening the lid.

**After the long smoking, the salmon rests. Elevate the racks to allow air to circulate.**

An instant-read thermometer is vital for checking the internal temperature of the salmon to tell if it's done. The thermometer I like best has a sensor connected by a metal cord to a digital readout that remains outside the smoker, which means you can keep track of the internal temperature of the fish without repeatedly opening the smoker and poking it.

♦ **Oven mitts.** You'll need to take the rack of salmon out of the hot smoker, which—though not as hot as some grills—can still burn.

♦ **A heatproof container to hold spent chips and ash.** As you add new chips to the smoker, you'll need to dump the old, especially if you're using a smoker rigged with a pan on a hotplate.

**Start with a smoker full of smoke and then add the salmon.** If you're using an electric smoker or a hotplate, add about 2 cups of wood chips and heat them. It should take about 15 to 20 minutes for you to see smoke. Ideally, the starting temperature in the smoker should be about 100°F. Once you've got smoke, put the salmon in the smoker.

**Add wood chips every couple of hours,** discarding any ashes if you're using the hotplate setup. You don't need to (nor would you want to) see smoke for the duration of the cooking; the amount you'll see will vary with the relative humidity and temperature that day.

**Open the vents to let the smoke circulate.** Because you want "fresh" smoke to circulate in-



side the smoker, you need places for the smoke to escape—by opening a vent, for example. On my homemade smoker, I found that there was a small “chimney” built into and through the oven and that was usually ample ventilation. I would also leave the oven door slightly ajar to let heat and smoke escape if the oven was getting too hot or if I felt there was too much smoke. How much smoke is too much? I can’t give a precise answer, but I’ve always said that it doesn’t take that much smoke to flavor the fish. You’ll need to experiment to learn how much smoke you like.

**Gradually increase the temperature inside the smoker** over the course of the day so that during the last hour or so it hovers between 150° and 160°F.

**Smoke the salmon until it reaches an internal temperature of 145°F in its thickest part**, which will take eight to ten hours. According to the Food & Drug Administration, it’s safer to hold the salmon at 145°F for a half hour to be sure any bacteria have been killed, and this is what I do in my professional operation. On a home smoker, it can be hard to keep the salmon at 145°F, and you run the risk of overcooking it, especially in its thinner parts. I smoked salmon at home for years, bringing it to just 140°F before taking it out; I never had any trouble, and I always had moist, tender fish.

The duration of smoking depends on the weather and the size of the salmon. I’ve never cooked a batch in less than eight hours; ten hours is more the norm. If the weather turns ugly, keep in mind that you can finish the salmon inside in a very low oven.

**Remove the fillets (still on the rack on which they cooked) and let them rest in a cool area**, elevated so air can circulate around them (bricks or overturned coffee cups can work as heatproof legs). After an hour or so, carefully remove the salmon from the rack. The salmon’s skin side will likely be stuck to the rack. To avoid tearing the fish, run your fingers between the grates on the rack, pressing into the fillet wherever the flesh sunk between the metal of the rack. Wrap the fillets in plastic and refrigerate overnight; the salmon slices better when fully cooled.

### Day 3: Slice and eat

Hot-smoked salmon doesn’t slice the way that cold-smoked does. Instead, you get thicker slices or chunks that flake apart like conventionally cooked salmon. There will be an outer crust that can make slicing difficult, but a sharp knife, especially a hollow-edged slicing knife (often called a ham knife) ought to do the job.

A whole smoked fillet makes a stunning presentation by itself and will disappear at any occasion. I also like smoked salmon in scrambled eggs, in salads, and in pasta dishes. Smoked salmon must be refrig-

erated—though you don’t want to serve it too cold straight out of the refrigerator—and will keep for at least ten days, but it’s so good, it’s unlikely to be around that long.

*Ed Starbird retired from the Taunton Press (which publishes Fine Cooking) to smoke salmon full-time in Virginia. He sells his salmon to restaurants, gourmet food shops, and caterers, as well as through Virginia Traditions catalog (see Sources, p. 80). ♦*

## Make a permanent smoker from a used oven, or a temporary one from a kettle grill

*I love smoking salmon so much, and had so many requests from friends, that I built my own superefficient, inexpensive smoker using an old oven and a hotplate. Here's how.*

I bought an ordinary, used electric range at a local appliance store. (Call the store owner to see if you can get your hands on an old one before it gets turned into scrap metal.) Look for an oven that has stainless-steel racks in good condition and a bottom drawer that can be cleaned up easily.

To start, remove all burners inside the oven, as well as the cover that holds the electric burners. (I took out everything electric, even the clock.) Drill a small hole into the face of the drawer for the cord of the hotplate to fit through. Cut a hole about the circumference of a grapefruit directly through the bottom of the oven to the drawer below (I used an electric saw). Fit a cylinder of duct piping around the inside of the hole. Fashion a top for the piping that allows the free flow of hot air and smoke into the oven above it but prevents fish oil from dripping onto your heated wood chips, which will be in a cast-iron skillet on the hotplate in the drawer below. I made a series of 2-inch cuts in the top of the pipe and then bent the

edges back. I then capped the notched pipe with a foil-lined tray.

The stove belongs outside on a solid, dry base, preferably under a carport or patio roof. Or, if you're really handy, you can build a simple wooden enclosure to both hide the smoker—it's efficient, but it ain't pretty—and keep it out of the rain.



*The folks at Fine Cooking rigged a temporary version using a kettle grill and a hotplate. Here's how:*

Set a metal-housed hotplate on the bottom grate to one side, running the cord thorough the grill's air vent on the bottom. Position some heavy-duty foil around the side of the hotplate to keep fish oil from dripping on it. Fill a small cast-iron pan with wood chips. Situate the grill's top grate so that the hinged side that allows you to add coals to the fire is over the hotplate; this will let you reach the thermostat. The salmon goes on the other side of the top grate, as far from the hotplate as possible.

**An important note:** If you jury-rig your own smoker, it's up to you to ensure that it will work safely.



# Cooking with Smoke

There's a smoker out there to suit your needs and your budget

BY JOANNE McALLISTER SMART

Before being introduced to the world of competitive barbecuing by *Fine Cooking* contributor and barbecue champion Paul Kirk, I'd have thought a smoker was a specialized piece of equipment used to smoke ham, bacon, and salmon. I've since learned that a smoker, called a "cooker" by barbecue aficionados, does all that, but it's also used to make real barbecue: tangy pulled pork, tender ribs, smoky brisket—foods that make your mouth water and your heart sing. At competitions, you'll see giant customized cookers, built to hold ten briskets, ten whole chickens, and a dozen racks of ribs—all at one time. But that's far from the only option in smokers.

There are many models that are easy to use and suitably sized—and priced—for the backyard or rooftop.

## Things to consider before you buy

Barbecuing means cooking food long and slow over indirect heat (as opposed to grilling, which means cooking directly over high heat for a short time). You can barbecue just about anything—I've seen recipes for rice, sea scallops, even olives—but the heart of the matter lies with meat. When barbecued, cuts of meat—generally the less expensive but more flavorful cuts, like shoulder and butt—render their fat, absorb the flavor of the smoke, and become fall-off-the-bone tender. "You can use a covered grill," says Bill Jamison, who with his wife, Cheryl, wrote *Smoke & Spice* and *Sublime Smoke* (see below for more on how to barbecue with a kettle grill). But if you really love barbecue, "the best thing to do is to get a dedicated smoker."

There are basically three styles of smoker: water smokers, charcoal grills and ovens, and log pits. Most barbecue pros prefer log pits, but there are fans of each style. As Paul Kirk notes, "Any pit you can control the temperature on is a good pit." The illus-

## Water smokers



**How they work:** Charcoal, gas, or electric heat source located at the bottom. Aromatic woods placed

on or near the heat source produce smoke. Water pan directly above the heat source keeps temperature low, adds moisture, and catches fat and juices to keep them from burning. Food rests on grate above water pan. Many models can fit a turkey and a roast at the same time.

**Price range:** \$40 to \$80 for low-end models; \$160 to \$180 for premium models.

**Things to look for:** Ample air vents for temperature control; rustproof water pan; sturdy legs; stay-cool handles. Premium models should be made from heavy-gauge steel,

come with a side fuel door to make adding fuel easier, and have heavy cooking grates.

**Pros:** Generally inexpensive, easy to set up, often come in easy-to-use electric models, easily portable. Can also be used to steam foods, and some models double as grills.

**Cons:** Can't use whole logs, which provide best smoke. Increased cooking time compared to log pits. Water in water pan can unintentionally steam food and may not provide a crisp finish (but you can cook without the water or remove it toward the end of cooking).

## Charcoal grills & ovens



**How they work:** For a kettle-style grill, small charcoal fire and water pan on bottom grate. Wood chips or chunks go on coals to provide aromatic smoke. Food goes on opposite side of fire on top grate for indirect cooking. Temperature controlled by opening or closing top and bottom vents.

**Price range:** \$100 and up for large kettle grills.

**What to look for:** Good construction, ample vents.

# — in Style

trations and text below show you how the different styles work and suggest things to consider when buying that style of smoker.

Some topics to consider as you narrow the field:

**How serious are you about barbecue?** (Translation: how much do you want to spend?) If you already cook outside a lot and love the smoky flavor of real barbecue, you'll likely use a smoker often. Most folks get their feet wet with an inexpensive water smoker, like those made by Brinkmann and Coleman, which cost under \$50. As they find they want to barbecue larger quantities of food with better control, they upgrade either to a pricier, better-built water smoker, like Weber's Smokey Mountain Cooker, or to a log pit.

**How much food do you want to barbecue at one time?** Think about how many people you cook for and how often you entertain. Most people err on the side of buying a smoker that's too small; remember that the smoke needs room to circulate, so you can't pack the cooking area too full.

**Do you enjoy tending a fire?** For many people, tending to a fire is what barbecue is all about. To suggest an alternate heat source amounts to blasphemy.

And certainly the best smoke comes from wood. All that aside, you may want to consider an electric smoker, which keeps the heat steady with minimal attention. A style not illustrated here, for example, is Cookshack's electric oven, which has racks for the food and an electrically heated wood box; you turn it on and don't touch it again until the food's done (home models start at \$475). Inexpensive water smokers also come in electric models—the wood chips go on or near the electric element. An electric smoker may cost a bit more initially, but electricity is a cheaper fuel source than charcoal over the long run.

For more information on the manufacturers mentioned in this article, see Sources, p. 80. If you want to do more general research before buying a smoker, here are some good sources: *Smoke & Spice* and *Sublime Smoke*, by Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison; both books include more detail about the various smoker styles, as well as source information and many recipes. For a great overview of how log pits and water smokers work, check out [www.barbecuen.com](http://www.barbecuen.com). For an in-depth look at various brands and models, visit [www.eaglequest.com/~bbq](http://www.eaglequest.com/~bbq). ♦

Joanne McAllister Smart is an associate editor for Fine Cooking.

## Log pits with offset firebox

**Pros:** If you already own one, a low-cost introduction to smoking.

**Cons:** Kettle grills as smokers offer very limited space for cooking. Need to lift lid to replenish coals and wood, which can drop temperature and increase cooking time.

**Note:** The Hasty-Bake Charcoal Oven, which acts as both a grill and a smoker, features a separate, adjustable firebox below the grill with a full-width door for easy access to the fire. A crank handle raises and lowers the firebox depending on whether you're grilling or smoking. Prices begin at \$800.

### How they work:

Wood or charcoal contained in a separate fire chamber, away from food. Vented smokestack draws heat and smoke through the cooking chamber. Premium smokers designed to use whole logs as heat source; lower-end models generally use charcoal or wood chunks.

**Price range:** \$180 to \$200 for discount-store models, such as some New Braunfels; \$700 and up (way up) for heavy-duty or custom-made models, such as Oklahoma Joe's, Pitt's & Spitt's, and BBQ Pits by Klose (see Sources, p. 80)

### What to look for:

The thickest metal and sturdiest construction you can afford. All parts should fit together without gaps and holes; avoid sharp edges and unwelded corners. Look for adjustable controls on the firebox (for controlling temperature). On premium models, look for thick (at least 1/4-inch) heavy-gauge metal, especially on the firebox; a smoke baffle between the firebox and cooking chamber for good smoke and heat distribution; an accurate industrial thermometer; a water reservoir with a drain; a pull-out ash pan; and plenty of shelf and table space.



**Pros:** Can barbecue large quantities of food at one time and on a single level. Separate firebox makes tending the fire easier and more efficient. Height is more comfortable than most water smokers. Premium models can use whole

logs in firebox and can last a lifetime.

**Cons:** Can be very expensive. Not as portable as smaller smokers. Can look big and bulky, depending on the size and style.



# Free-Form Rustic Tarts

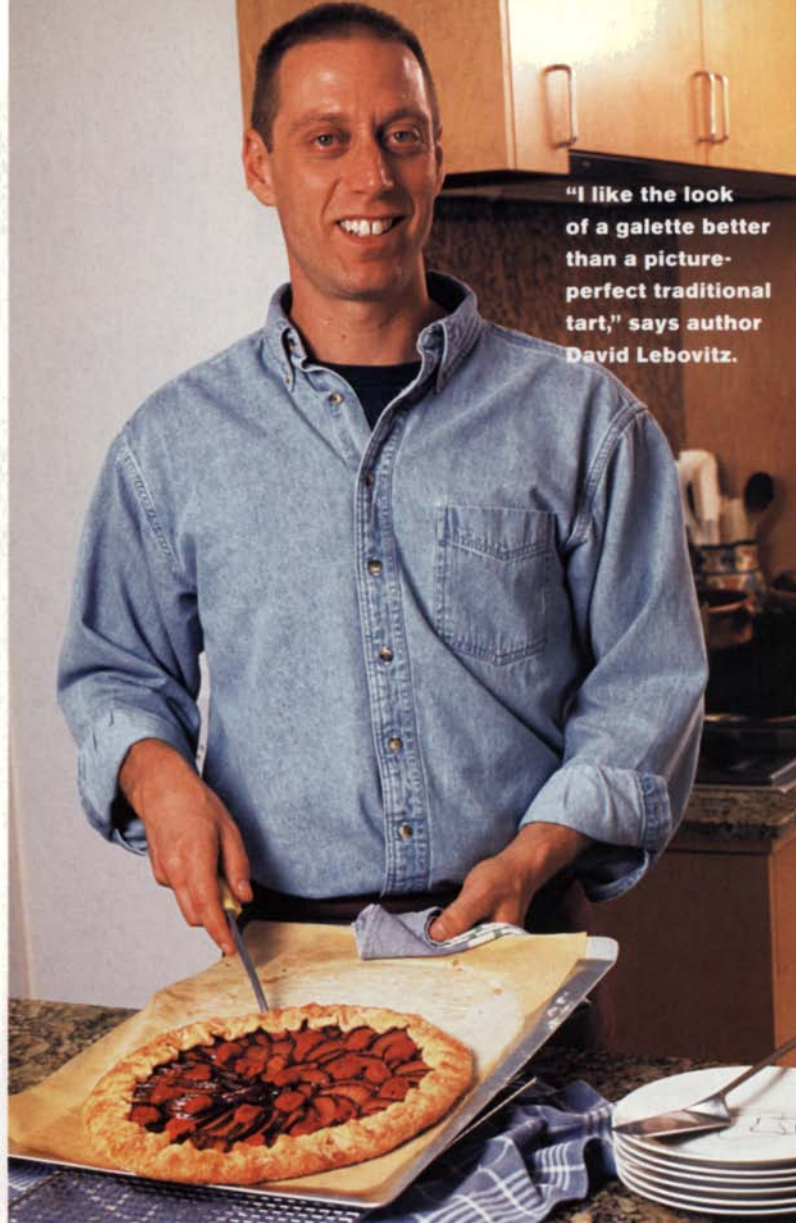
Whether sweet or savory, a galette is  
less fussy than a traditional tart  
and offers more crisp crust







**Plums are abundant in late summer, and they work brilliantly in galettes.**



**"I like the look of a galette better than a picture-perfect traditional tart," says author David Lebovitz.**

**BY DAVID LEBOVITZ**

**O**n a visit to France many years ago, I noticed that just about every bistro and café featured some sort of free-form fruit tart. Much less formal than the classic heavily glazed, precisely fluted French fruit tart, these charming desserts consisted of a thin layer of fruit—often sliced and of a single variety—baked on top of a buttery, crisp crust. Instead of the straight, rigid sides you get from a tart pan, the edges of these tarts were just folded over onto the fruit. I was captivated by their simplicity.

To the delight of my friends and family—as well as the patrons of Chez Panisse, where I made desserts for many years—I began creating my own galettes, savory ones as well as sweet. Many galettes later, I'm still a fan of this rustic style of tart.





**Chunky butter makes light pastry.** Here the author uses a pastry blender to cut the butter into the flour, but a stand mixer works well, too.



**Galette assembly is best done on a parchment-lined baking sheet.** The parchment makes it easier to slide the baked tart onto a cooling rack.

### Keep the butter big for flaky dough

My galette dough is a wonder. Easy to mix and roll, it bakes up sturdy yet flaky. I usually make my dough in a stand mixer, but you can use a food processor or cut the butter into the flour with a pastry cutter, two knives, or even your fingers if they're not so warm that they'll melt the butter. For the best results, don't cut the butter too small. Leave it in big, visible chunks—sugar-cube size is fine. You'll see streaks of butter when you gather the dough into a disk, but don't be alarmed. In the oven, those streaks of butter help to create light, flaky, buttery layers.

### Protect the crust and add flavor with additional fillings

I love frangipane, so I frequently create desserts that satisfy my craving for this sweet, rich almond filling. My pineapple galette uses a layer of frangipane as a foil for the tangy, ripe fruit, but the frangipane serves another purpose as well; it absorbs some of the juices from the pineapple, keeping the crust from getting soggy and making the tart easier to slice. The crushed cookies in the plum tart do the same. There's no barrier for my savory tart because its ingredients aren't as moist and because the corn-meal crust holds up better.

### Fold up the crust to keep the filling in

The advantage of a galette is that it's meant to be rustic so there's no need to worry about creating picture-perfect edges of a perfectly even thickness. But you can play around with the look of your tart by varying the way you pleat the edges as you fold them in over the filling (see the sidebar on p. 73). You can also create more or less crust by folding the edge in a little or a lot. A little means that most of what you



**A sprinkling of crushed cookies keeps the crust crisp by absorbing some of the fruits' juices.** A layer of frangipane works well, too.

see is the pretty fruit, but I've also seen some galettes that leave just the tiniest of openings for the fruit to peek out. I generally opt for folding the edge over by about two inches, which gives me a nice ratio of crust to the open face.

### Serve your galette warm

Usually when I make a galette, I'll make an extra disk of dough to store in the freezer (it will keep for up to two months if wrapped well) since it's just as easy to make two as one. (Defrost frozen dough in the refrigerator for a day before using.) Once the galette is baked, however, I absolutely insist on serving it almost immediately, since the buttery flavor and aroma of the dough is most appealing when the galette is warm out of the oven. This can be trickier

with dessert galettes: you don't want to spend all of dinnertime making it. But, if you have your dough rolled out and your other components ready to go, all you have to do is assemble the galette—remembering that it doesn't have to look perfect—and bake it. If you do make your galette ahead, reheat it before serving.

## RECIPES

### Sweet Galette Dough

Freeze any unused dough well wrapped in plastic; defrost the frozen dough in the refrigerator for a day before using it. *Yields enough dough for two galettes about 11 inches in diameter.*

**11¼ oz. (2½ cups) all-purpose flour**

**2 Tbs. sugar**

**½ tsp. salt**

**8 oz. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled**

**5 oz. (about ⅔ cup) ice water**

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, and salt. Cut in the chilled butter using a stand mixer, a food processor, or a pastry blender until the butter is evenly distributed but still in large, visible pieces. Add the ice water all at once to the flour and butter. Mix the dough just until it begins to come together (if using a stand mixer or a food processor, be especially careful not to overmix the dough). Gather the dough with your hands—don't worry if you see streaks of butter—and shape it into two disks. Wrap the disks in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

### Cornmeal Galette Dough

The texture of this dough makes it a little more prone to tearing, especially as you fold it up and over a filling. If this happens, simply pinch the dough together and move on. *Yields enough dough for one galette about 11 inches in diameter; recipe can be doubled.*

**5 oz. (1¼ cups) all-purpose flour**

**1½ oz. (⅓ cup) fine yellow cornmeal**

**1 tsp. sugar**

**¼ tsp. salt**

**3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled**

**3 Tbs. olive oil**

**2 oz. (¼ cup) ice water**

In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, cornmeal, sugar, and salt. Cut in the chilled butter using a stand mixer, a food processor, or a pastry blender until it's evenly distributed but still in large, visible pieces. Add the olive oil and ice water and mix until the dough begins to come together. Gather the dough with your hands and shape it into a disk. Wrap the disk in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

### Plum & Raspberry Galette

I originally developed this recipe using amaretti—very sweet, very light, very crisp almond meringue cookies. You can often find them in Italian and specialty groceries. Almond biscotti work well, too. Choose plums that are ripe but still a bit firm so they're easy to slice. My usual plum of choice is the popular Santa Rosa, but red-fleshed plums, such as Elephant Heart, make a dazzling tart. You could also use sliced nectarines or peaches. *Yields 1 galette; serves six to eight.*

*(Ingredient list follows)*

**Spend some time on the special effects.**

You can simply pile the fruit on in an even layer or fan it out for a more finished look.





- 1/3 cup crushed amaretti or almond biscotti (use a food processor or put the cookies in a plastic bag and crush with them a blunt object until they're the texture of coarse sand)**
- 1 Tbs. all-purpose flour**
- 6 ripe plums (about 1 lb.), rinsed and dried**
- 1 disk Sweet Galette Dough (recipe on p. 71)**
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**
- 2 Tbs. sugar**
- 3 oz. fresh raspberries**
- 2 Tbs. strained raspberry jam (optional)**

Adjust an oven rack to the center position and heat the oven to 400°F. Combine the crushed amaretti and the flour and set aside.

Cut each plum in half, remove its pit, and cut the flesh into 1/4-inch-thick slices.

Cover a baking sheet, preferably without sides, with kitchen parchment. (If your baking sheet has sides, flip it over and use the back.)

On a lightly floured surface, roll the galette dough into a 15-inch round. Transfer the dough by folding it in half, picking it up, and unfolding it on the lined baking sheet. Sprinkle the crushed amaretti over the dough

evenly, leaving a 2-inch border without crumbs.

Arrange the plums over the crumbs in concentric circles, overlapping slightly. Lift the edges of the dough and fold them inward over the filling, pleating as you go, to create a folded-over border. Brush the border with the melted butter and sprinkle the entire galette with the sugar. Bake for 30 min. Remove from the oven and sprinkle the raspberries over the plums. Return the galette to the oven and bake until the crust is browned and the fruit is cooked and tender, another 15 min.

Slide the galette off the parchment and onto a cooling rack. Let cool for about 10 min. before slicing. For a shinier filling, brush on the jam before slicing.

### Pineapple & Frangipane Galette

Frangipane is a rich almond-flavored pastry cream. I make this version using almond paste, which is available in the baking section of the supermarket. *Yields 1 galette; serves six to eight.*

#### FOR THE FRANGIPANE:

- 5 oz. almond paste (1/2 cup packed)**
- 1/4 cup sugar**
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- 1 1/2 Tbs. dark rum**
- 1 large egg, at room temperature**

#### TO ASSEMBLE THE TART:

- 1/2 large ripe pineapple, peeled and cored, eyes removed**
- 1 disk Sweet Galette Dough (recipe on p. 71)**
- 2 Tbs. sugar**
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**

**To make the frangipane**—With an electric mixer, beat together the almond paste, sugar, and butter. Add the rum and egg and continue to mix until smooth.

**To assemble the galette**—Adjust an oven rack to the center position and heat the oven to 400°F. With a serrated knife, cut the pineapple half into 1/2-inch slices, and then cut the slices into 1-inch pieces.

Cover a baking sheet, preferably one without sides, with kitchen parchment. (If your baking sheet has sides, flip it over and use the back.)

On a lightly floured surface, roll the galette dough into a 15-inch round. Transfer the dough by folding it in half, picking it up, and unfolding it on the lined baking sheet. Smear the frangipane over the dough, leaving a 2-inch border without frangipane. Arrange the pineapple slices in an even layer over the frangipane. Lift the edges of the dough and fold them inward over the filling, pleating as you go, to create a folded-over border. Brush the border with the melted butter and sprinkle the entire galette with the sugar. Bake until the sugary crust has browned and the frangipane is set, 30 to 35 min. Let cool for about 5 min., and then slide the galette off the parchment and onto a cooling rack. Let cool for another 20 min. before slicing.

### Tomato, Corn & Cheese Galette with Fresh Basil

Because this dough has the added crunch and texture of cornmeal, it's a bit more difficult to roll out, so be a little more generous when flouring your work



**Individual galettes are a charming alternative to a piece of pie.**

To make them, divide the dough and the filling into sixths for the dessert tarts and into fourths for the savory one.

# Playing with pleating

Because you're folding a wide edge of dough onto a smaller part of the circle, the dough will pleat naturally. If you pay no mind to the following suggestions, chances are you will still wind up with a charming looking tart. But I thought I'd show you a few ways of folding just for fun.



**Fold large sections for straight sides and a geometric look.** The quickest way to give your galette an edge is by folding up large sections of the edge of the dough circle, overlapping them slightly. What you end up with, however, is not a circle but a hexagon or a heptagon.



**Pleat in one direction for a uniform look.** For a perfectly round tart, fold the dough onto itself in regularly spaced pleats.



**Or crimp the excess for a pulled-purse look.** As you fold the dough over, pinch the excess up away from the filling.

surface. If the dough tears, just pinch it back together. Olives can be used in place of corn for a delicious variation. *Yields 1 galette; serves four as lunch, eight as an appetizer.*

**2 Tbs. olive oil**

**1 large white onion, thinly sliced**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**2 cloves garlic, chopped finely**

**½ bunch basil, washed, dried, and coarsely chopped, (to yield about ½ cup); plus 10 whole basil leaves**

**Kernels from 1 ear of corn (about 1 cup)**

**1 recipe Cornmeal Galette Dough (recipe on p. 71)**

**1 large or 2 medium ripe tomatoes (about ¾ lb. total) cut into ⅓-inch slices, drained on paper towels**

**3 oz. Comté or Gruyère cheese, shredded**

**1 large egg yolk mixed with 1 tsp. milk or cream**

Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan, preferably non-stick, over medium heat. Add the sliced onion and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned, about 10 min. Season with salt and pepper. Add the garlic, chopped basil, and corn and cook for 30 seconds. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and set aside to cool.

Adjust an oven rack to the center position and heat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet, preferably one without sides, with kitchen parchment. (If your baking sheet has sides, flip it over and use the back.)

Roll the dough on a floured surface into a 15-inch round, lifting the dough with a metal spatula as you roll to make sure it's not sticking. If it is, dust the surface with more flour. Transfer it by rolling it around the rolling pin and unrolling it on the lined baking sheet.

Spread the onion and corn mixture over the dough, leaving a 2-inch border without filling. Arrange the tomatoes in a single layer over the onions and season them with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the cheese over



the tomatoes. Lift the edges of the dough and fold them inward over the filling, pleating as you go, to form a folded-over border. Pinch together any tears in the dough. Brush the egg yolk and milk mixture over the exposed crust.

Bake until the crust has browned and the cheese has melted, 35 to 45 min. Slide the galette off the parchment and onto a cooling rack. Let cool for 10 min. Stack the remaining 10 basil leaves and use a sharp knife to cut them into a chiffonade. Cut the galette into wedges, sprinkle with the basil, and serve.

*David Lebovitz was a pastry cook at Chez Panisse for twelve years. He recently published his first cookbook, Room for Dessert (HarperCollins). ♦*

**Galettes aren't just for dessert.** Here tomatoes, corn, and basil top a cornmeal crust for a perfect summer lunch.



# Getting the most from garlic



**Fresh garlic** is firm and plump with unbroken skins.



**Older garlic** has shrunk cloves and broken skins.



**Sprouting garlic** is past its prime and will have less flavor.

We're cooking with a lot more garlic than we used to. According to the Food Institute, Americans now consume more than 2 pounds of garlic (14 to 18 heads) a year, up from 1 pound a decade ago. With all this garlic to peel and chop, it's good to know how to handle it.

**Buy firm, plump, heavy heads with tight, unbroken papery skins.** The heavier the garlic, the fresher, juicier, and better tasting it is. Also, large, full heads tend to last longer than small ones. Avoid garlic with mold, green sprouts, or sunken or shriveled cloves—all signs of deterioration.

**Store garlic in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place (not the refrigerator).** Keep it in a dark drawer or container to help keep it from sprouting or drying out quickly. Discard garlic if it feels empty or soft.

To separate cloves from a head, use a little pressure. I like to set the whole head, root side down, on a flat surface and press on the neck with the heel of my hand; a few cloves break off under light pressure. Some people find that pressing on the side of the head or the root end works better. Very fresh, tight heads need more pressure than older ones.

To peel a clove of garlic, first break the skin. Set the clove on a cutting board and cover it with a flat side of a chef's knife. With the heel of your hand, apply light pressure to the knife blade—enough to

split the skin, but not so much to crush the clove (unless, of course, you want it smashed). You can also lightly twist a clove to loosen the skin or slice off the root end, which will let you peel off the skin as you would an onion. An easy way to peel cloves is to use a garlic roll—a soft, rubber tube that quickly and neatly removes the papery peel. A rubber jar opener works well too.

If you have to peel a lot of cloves, drop them in boiling water for the count of ten. After draining, the softened peels will slip off more easily.

Once the garlic is peeled, cut away any brown spots and trim the root end if it's dried or hard. Garlic that's been stored too long may begin to send up green sprouts. Some cooks find the sprout bitter, and they cut the clove in half and pry out the sprout with a paring knife; others like the tender texture and assertive character of the green sprout. The bottom line is that once a clove has sprouted, it tends to be more shriveled and pungent, lacking some of the juicy, aromatic flavor of garlic in its prime.

The volatile compounds that give garlic its characteristic pungency aren't released until it's chopped or crushed. Since these flavors begin to dissipate and change once exposed to air, chop garlic at the last minute before using. If you must chop garlic ahead, drizzle it with oil to help slow



**Pressure on the head forces a clove or two to break off.**

Some cooks like to press on the root end or the side; I find that pressing down on the neck works best.

**Apply light pressure to crack the skin of a garlic clove.** With the heel of your hand, press down lightly on the flat side of a chef's knife covering the garlic.



**To mince garlic into even pieces,** use a sharp paring knife to make several horizontal slices through the clove. Next, make vertical cuts through the clove.



**Finish mincing by slicing down across the width of the clove.**

the oxidation and deterioration of flavor and refrigerate it.

**Whether to mince, chop, or crush depends on the dish.** For uncooked recipes, like aioli or Caesar salad, thoroughly crush garlic or make it into a paste so the flavor is evenly distributed. A paste is also best for smooth-textured dishes, like soups and sauces. For quick-cooking, chunky dishes, like pasta sauces and sautéed vegetables, finely mince or thinly slice garlic to get the best release of flavor. For long-cooking braises and stews, roughly chop or thickly slice garlic so it slowly melds with the other ingredients. Garlic's flavor and pungency change dramatically as it cooks: the more



**To crush a clove,** cover it with one flat side of a chef's knife and whack it hard with the heel of your hand.



**For roughly chopped garlic,** rock the blade of your knife over the garlic, scraping it into a pile as you go.



**To make a paste,** continue to chop, adding salt to help break it down. Drag the knife over the garlic to help pulverize it.

it cooks, the mellower it gets.

To mince garlic evenly, cut it as you would an onion (see photos below left). To make a garlic paste, crush the garlic and chop it finely with a little salt (see photos above).

**Remember that minced garlic burns easily and becomes bitter,** but there are ways to avoid this. Since garlic is often sautéed with onions, and onions take longer to soften, sauté the onions first

until they're cooked through. Only then should you toss in the minced garlic and let it cook for a minute or so.

*Molly Stevens is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking.* ♦

## Spareribs vs. back ribs

There are basically two kinds of pork ribs. Those most commonly found in supermarkets are **spareribs**. The thicker and meatier ribs from the pork belly, they're what's leftover (or spare) after the bacon

has been cut away. A full slab of spareribs consists of the front, or belly ends, of eleven ribs and the cartilage that connects the ribs to the breastbone. Many butchers remove the sternum portion and much of the connecting cartilage, leaving a narrower, better slab of ribs called a St. Louis cut. A slab of St. Louis spareribs weighs 2 to 3 pounds (smaller means more tender); each slab will feed two or three people. As when buying bacon, look for a good ratio of meat to fat; the fat will baste the meaty portion as the ribs cook. Spareribs come from the relatively tough but incredibly succulent belly portion of a hog, so they're best cooked slowly and gently, which is why they're often a first choice for slow-cooked barbecuing and braising.

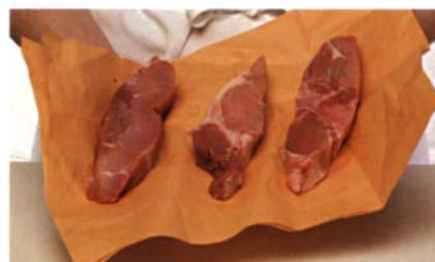


**Spareribs**



**Back ribs**

**Back ribs** are leaner and smaller, from the top, back, or loin side of the hog. Since a good deal of pork loin is sold with the bone attached (i.e. pork chops and bone-in loin roasts), back ribs are a little less common and more expensive than spareribs. A slab of back ribs, sometimes called baby back ribs because of their rather diminutive size, includes eight ribs and weighs 1 to 2 pounds. The backbone is always removed from back ribs, making it a cinch to slice between the ribs to cut a slab into smaller portions. Most rib lovers figure one slab per person. Because back ribs come from the loin section of the hog, they're more tender and lean but less flavorful than spareribs. Back ribs can be grilled or broiled as well as barbecued.



**Country-style ribs**

You may also see "country-style" ribs in the store. These aren't ribs at all, but blade steaks or chops. Cut from the blade portion of the loin's shoulder end, they often include part of the upper rib bones, though they may be boneless. They have a lot of connective tissue and fat, making them ideal for barbecue, not unlike real ribs.



# Taking a Fresh Look at Sage



**Pungent sage is pretty, too.**  
Cleveland (far left), purple, and tricolor sage make a charming garden trio.

**F**or many people, sage is that dried herb used once a year in the stuffing for the Thanksgiving turkey. But the wonderful flavor and aroma of fresh sage should be enjoyed year-round—its scent reminds me of eucalyptus and its taste of the tannin in a good red wine, with hints of lemon and thyme.

A shrubby perennial with delicate bluish-pink flowers,



*Salvia officinalis*  
(common sage)

sage thrives on the dusty hills of dry, sunny climates and is native to southeastern Europe. Fittingly, Italy's robust cuisine is a perfect match for fresh sage, as in the classic *saltimbocca*—pan-fried veal filets wrapped around prosciutto and sage.

If you've not experienced cooking with fresh sage, try this classic sauce for pasta: heat  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter (or olive oil, as I prefer). Add a dozen or so sage leaves. Cook until the sage leaves start to crisp (and if using butter, it turns deep amber). Add a squeeze of lemon and toss with cheese ravioli or tortellini.

This recipe demonstrates deliciously that sage is best when carried by the fat in the dish. With its slightly astringent bite, fresh sage cuts through richness, whether it's a butter

sauce, an oily fish like salmon, or the skin of a roasted chicken. In the same way, sage balances the sweetness of winter squash or caramelized onions—other classic partners for the herb.

**Sage is best cooked.** Like thyme and rosemary, sage is one of those hearty herbs of which a little can go a long way and which is best when cooked. Raw fresh sage feels a little harsh on the tongue, both in texture and in flavor. If you use it raw, say in a spread, use only small, tender leaves and chop them finely.

When you cook with sage, add it early on to starchy or mild-flavored ingredients such as grains, squashes, beans, and meats, so that they can absorb its assertive flavor. Outspoken ingredients, such as garlic or fish, can handle the bittersweet strength of barely cooked sage quite well.

**Buy dried sage in whole leaf form.** In summer, I use fresh sage exclusively, picking the leaves from my sage plant

as I need them. Fresh sage leaves don't keep well. If you don't have a plant—they're a great addition to an herb garden or even a flower garden—you can keep a few sprigs in a jar of water or in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for a few days.

As for dried rubbed or ground sage, I generally avoid it; by the time it's been dried, ground, and jarred, it has lost much of the volatile oils that make sage so special.

Instead, I either dry my own sage or look for dried whole leaves, available at some specialty markets and by mail-order (see Sources, p. 80). If a recipe calls for dried or ground sage, I simply rub the dried leaves between my fingers or grind them just before use in an electric spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. If using dried in place of fresh, use half the amount.

*Sophia Schweitzer writes about food, wine, and fitness from her home in Hawaii.* ♦

## Experiment with fresh sage

- ♦ Top salmon fillets with a chain of whole sage leaves and then bake. The leaves add flavor and look pretty, too.
- ♦ Add finely chopped tender sage leaves to soft whipped cream cheese. Season with a drop of lemon juice and some black pepper; spread on crackers.
- ♦ Fry whole sage leaves for a mildly pungent, pretty garnish: sauté in hot olive oil seasoned with a dash of sea salt until the leaves are crisp.
- ♦ Add chopped sage to mushroom risotto for a subtle layer of floral spiciness.
- ♦ Toss diced potatoes with some olive oil, salt, minced garlic, and chopped sage leaves. Roast and serve with grated *parmigiano reggiano*.
- ♦ Cook white beans with sage, garlic, and black pepper to create a richly flavored vegetarian stew.

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# Getting the best texture in ice cream

One of the joys of making ice cream at home is having the freedom to change ingredients and personalize a recipe to suit my mood. But no matter what my flavor of the week is, I always aim for ice cream with a creamy, smooth texture, a soft consistency, and a full body that's neither too airy nor too dense. To get this wonderful mouth-feel, it helps to know how different ingredients and techniques affect texture and consistency.

## Dairy products improve smoothness

When an ice-cream mixture gets poured into a machine and stirred, some of the liquid

freezes into pure ice crystals while some of it remains liquid. The goal is to keep these developing ice crystals small and plentiful, so you end up with a smooth, creamy texture. If they grow too large, the resulting ice cream is coarse and icy.

**Cream and milk promote smoothness and lightness.** The high fat content in heavy cream and whipping cream coats ice crystals, preventing them from enlarging. It also acts as a lubricant between crystals, making even ice cream with larger crystals feel smooth on the tongue. Cream is also excellent at

trapping and holding air when the mixture is stirred and frozen, which gives the ice cream more body.

As important as cream is to great ice cream, however, it's possible to overdo it. If you've ever had ice cream that seemed to coat your mouth with fat, it probably

had too much cream. The solution is to reduce the cream and add a lower-fat dairy product, such as half-and-half or milk.

**Milk lightens ice cream because of its proteins,** which are superior to fat at trapping air (though not as good at holding it). This, by the way, is why skim milk foams up better than whole milk for cappuccino. Milk also contributes to smoothness, thanks to its high concentration of milk solids (such as calcium salts and lactose), which are even more effective than fat at controlling crystal size.

**Use condensed, evaporated, or powdered dry milk in moderate amounts.** Like milk, these ingredients have lots of milk solids, so ice crystals stay small. But they're also brimming with lactose (milk sugar), which makes them useful in another way. Lactose, like any sugar, lowers the freezing point of ice-cream mixtures. That means more of the mixture stays liquid at freezer temperature and the ice cream will be softer. But beware, if there's too much of these products, lactose crystals will form and you'll end up with a sandy-textured ice cream. You'll notice that Jim Peyton's ice creams on pp. 54–55 contain some evaporated milk (as well as cream and milk)—enough to make the ice creams very smooth and soft,



## How to modify a recipe for great homemade ice cream

To get:	you need to:	so use these ingredients:	and these techniques:
smooth, creamy texture	keep ice crystals small	cream (fat coats ice crystals) milk (milk solids obstruct ice crystals) egg yolks (emulsifiers hold fats and liquid together)	crank faster once thickening and freezing begins  heat milk or half-and-half to 175°F
soft, scoopable consistency	lower the freezing point of the custard mixture	sugar or honey condensed or evaporated milk (high lactose) liqueur or other spirits	
full body	trap air as the mixture freezes	milk (proteins trap air into foam) cream (fat holds air bubbles)	"age" the mixture for 4 to 12 hours in the fridge

but not enough to make them gritty.

**Adding fruit preserves is a great idea.** They have concentrated flavor plus a small amount of pectin, which keeps ice crystals small and improves creaminess. Preserves can be swapped out tablespoon for tablespoon with sugar.

Egg yolks, those great emulsifiers, will also contribute silky smoothness. For flavor, I always add a small amount of salt (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon). It enhances both the perception of sweetness and the flavor of the ice cream.

#### **Sugar and alcohol make ice cream softer**

Sugar makes ice cream softer

because it lowers the freezing point of a liquid. For an ice cream that can be scooped right out of the freezer, you need just the right amount of sugar—too little and the ice cream is as hard as a brick, too much and you have mush. If you find that your favorite ice cream recipe is brick-hard and nearly impossible to scoop, try adding more sugar next time. Or try replacing some of the sugar with honey. Because honey consists of sugars with smaller molecules than those of table sugar, it's more than twice as effective at lowering the freezing point as table sugar. Harold McGee, a food scientist, recommends substituting 1 tablespoon of honey

for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons of sugar in ice cream.

**Adding a liqueur or wine to an ice-cream mixture will make it softer** because alcohol, like sugar, lowers the freezing point of a liquid. If you like the firmness of a particular recipe but want to add a liqueur for flavor, you might counter the addition of alcohol by cutting back on the sugar. Liqueur is preferable to wine because, at freezer temperature, a wine's flavor would be muted.

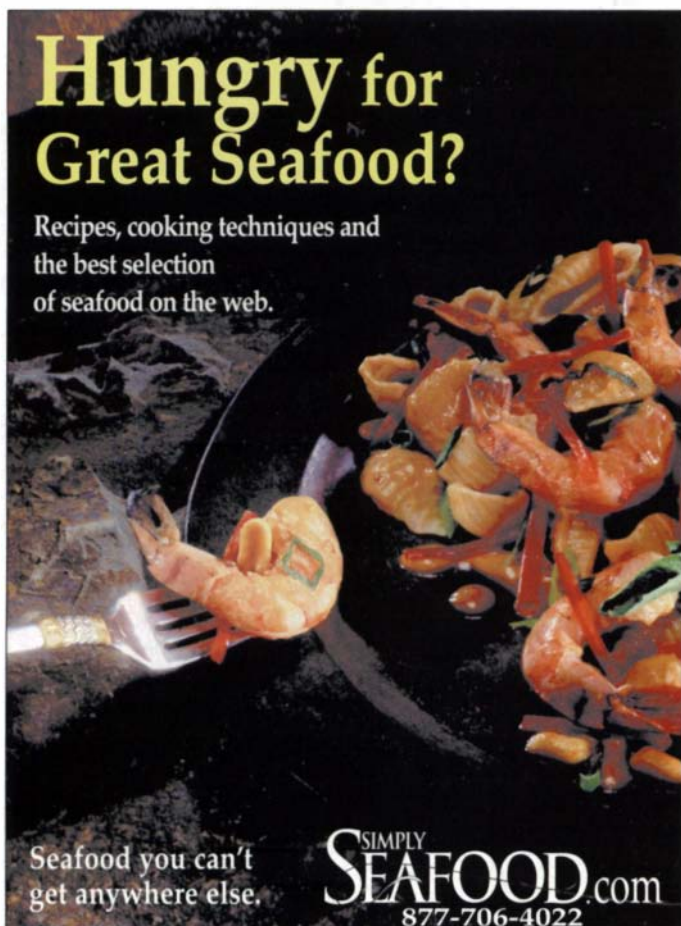
#### **Techniques that affect texture**

If you're using milk or half-and-half in the recipe, you should heat it to 175°F, just below scalding. I don't know

exactly what changes this heating causes—perhaps it denatures or partially coagulates some of the proteins—but whatever is occurring, the effect is a noticeably smoother ice cream. It isn't necessary to heat heavy cream or whipping cream, neither of which has very much protein.

**Chilling before freezing improves body, texture, and flavor.** I recommend "aging" the mixture for 4 to 12 hours at refrigerator temperature for the best texture.

*Shirley O. Corriher, a food scientist, is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking and the author of the award-winning Cook Wise (William Morrow). ♦*



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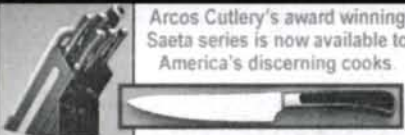
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## NUTRITION INFORMATION

Recipe (analysis per serving)	Page	Calories		Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Fats (g)				Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Notes
		total	from fat			total	sat	mono	poly				
Watermelon Agua Fresca	38	100	10	1	23	1.0	0	0.5	0.5	0	5	2	per cup
Honeydew Lemonade	38	160	0	1	44	0	0	0	0	0	20	2	per cup
Frico (Cheese Crisps)	39	70	45	5	1	5	3	1	0	15	45	0	per crisp
Salad of Spicy Greens w/Fried Cheese	39	480	300	18	28	34	16	14	2	75	930	4	per 1/6 recipe
Creamy Polenta w/Fresh Corn	40	290	120	8	38	14	6	6	1	20	430	6	
Smoked Tomato Sauce	41	50	30	1	6	3.5	2.0	1.0	0.5	10	150	1	per 1/4 cup
Blackberry Grunt	41	320	45	4	67	5	3	1	1	10	90	8	per serving
Chickpea Salad	44	210	50	9	32	5	2	1	1	10	230	7	per 1/6 recipe
White & Green Bean Salad	45	250	130	8	24	14	2	10	1	0	160	7	per 1/8 recipe
Black Bean & Corn Salad	45	340	130	13	43	15	2	10	2	0	310	13	per serving
Lime-Cayenne Pepper	47	80	80	0	0	9	6	3	0	25	190	0	about 1 Tbs.
Andalusian Gazpacho	50	390	270	4	30	30	4	21	4	0	1110	5	per cup
Roasted Red Pepper Gazpacho	50	210	140	3	19	15	2	11	2	0	260	5	per 1 1/4 cup
White Gazpacho	51	380	290	5	21	32	4	23	3	0	470	2	per cup
Chocolate Ice Cream w/Cinnamon	54	350	160	6	44	18	10	5	1	125	105	1	per 1/2 cup
Toasted Coconut Ice Cream	55	240	130	3	25	15	10	3	1	70	70	0	per 1/2 cup
Crema Morisca (Moorish Ice Cream)	55	250	110	4	31	12	6	3	2	75	70	1	per 1/2 cup
Spicy Grilled Pork & Grape Kebabs	58	240	120	24	6	13	3	8	1	75	200	1	per appetizer portion
Grilled Figs w/Goat Cheese & Mint	59	260	80	13	35	9	5	3	1	30	700	5	per serving
Grilled Mixed Fruits w/Island Spices	59	360	15	2	72	1.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	10	7	per serving
Thai Grilled Green Mango	59	140	5	2	35	0.5	0	0	0	0	560	4	per appetizer portion
Grilled Nectarines w/Blackberries	60	120	30	1	23	3.5	2.0	1.0	0.5	10	0	5	per serving
Hot-Smoked Salmon	62	190	70	26	1	8	1	3	3	70	630	0	per 4 oz. portion
Plum & Raspberry Galette	71	240	120	3	28	14	8	4	1	35	75	2	per 1/8 galette
Pineapple & Frangipane Galette	72	390	220	5	38	25	12	9	2	75	85	2	per 1/8 galette
Tomato, Corn & Cheese Galette	72	330	200	7	27	22	9	10	2	60	480	3	per 1/8 galette
Summer Vegetable Strata	86	350	140	17	35	16	6	7	2	195	650	3	per 1/6 recipe

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of San Diego, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in

the calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used.



# Brighten a Casserole with Summery Flavors



## Summer Vegetable Strata

Be sure to brown the squash for the best flavor. *Serves four to six.*

**About a dozen ½-inch-thick slices French or Italian bread (enough to cover the bottom of your pan), day-old or lightly toasted**

**1 clove garlic, lightly crushed**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**2 cups milk or a mixture of milk and cream**

**5 large eggs**

**½ cup freshly grated *parmigiano reggiano*, divided**

**Pinch dried red pepper flakes**

**1 loosely packed cup basil leaves, chopped**

**2 Tbs. olive oil**

**1 small onion, finely chopped**

**2 medium summer squash or zucchini, or 1 of each**

**2 ripe tomatoes**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter an 8x8-inch square baking dish. Rub the top of each slice of bread with the garlic clove. Lay the slices in the dish in one layer, cutting them into pieces where necessary. Season with salt and pepper.

Measure the milk in a 1-qt. measure, preferably one with a spout. (Or measure it and transfer it to a bowl.) Add the eggs, half of the cheese, the red pepper flakes, and a generous amount of salt and pepper. Whisk vigorously to beat the eggs and to combine. Add the basil and stir gently. Set aside.

In a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium high. Add the onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until it softens and colors lightly, about 5 min. Meanwhile, trim the squash, cut them lengthwise into quarters and, holding the quarters together, slice

them into pieces about ⅓ inch thick. Stir the squash into the onion, spread in a single layer, and let sit undisturbed for 1 to 2 min. to encourage browning; check before you turn them.

Meanwhile, halve and seed the tomatoes and chop the flesh coarsely. When the squash is lightly browned on both sides and crisp-tender, add the tomatoes, stir to toss, and take the vegetables off the heat.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to the dish, spreading them evenly over the bread. Give the milk and egg mixture a stir and gently pour it all into the dish. Top with the remaining cheese. Bake until the milk and egg mixture sets, 40 to 45 min. Let cool at least 5 min., slice into squares with the edge of a spatula, and use the spatula to lift out the pieces.

In summer, my dinner needs change. I want to eat lighter and to use the vegetables and herbs from my garden, and I don't want to spend a lot of time in the kitchen. Although cooking on the grill addresses these concerns well, by late summer, I also need a break from the grill.

So how does this vegetable strata fit in? Perfectly. Sort of a lazy person's quiche, the bottom "crust" is made from sliced bread that's topped with quickly sautéed vegetables. The vegetables and bread are bound by eggs beaten with milk and cheese, which brown and puff up nicely in the oven unattended—while you're out in the yard. The eggs and cheese may make the dish sound too rich for a hot summer night, but the mixture is brightened by the addition of fresh basil. Once the eggs set, the strata cuts easily into squares for serving. I serve it alongside a crisp green salad, with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar or a squeeze of lemon on

both. A Sauvignon Blanc or a rosé would be a nice summery accompaniment.

When summer ends, you'll want to keep the strata idea in your repertoire. You can play with the vegetables and cheese: sautéed leeks and mushrooms with Gruyère is a wonderful fall version (try a little fresh thyme in place of basil), as is onion and broccoli with Cheddar. Experiment with the bread, too: a sourdough baguette adds a bit of tang; a sesame-coated crust gives some texture; brioche soaks up more of the egg mixture; and olive bread adds another flavor element altogether.

One thing to keep in mind no matter what kind of strata you're assembling: Though it's tempting to skip the cooking of the vegetables, you need to do it, both to intensify their flavor and to rid them of much of their water; otherwise this dish ends up a watery mess.

*Joanne Smart is an associate editor for Fine Cooking.* ♦

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A vintner judges ripeness by tasting the grapes, chewing the skins and spitting (spit from red grapes should be dark), examining the pulp (it should be translucent), and checking the seeds (they should be brown).



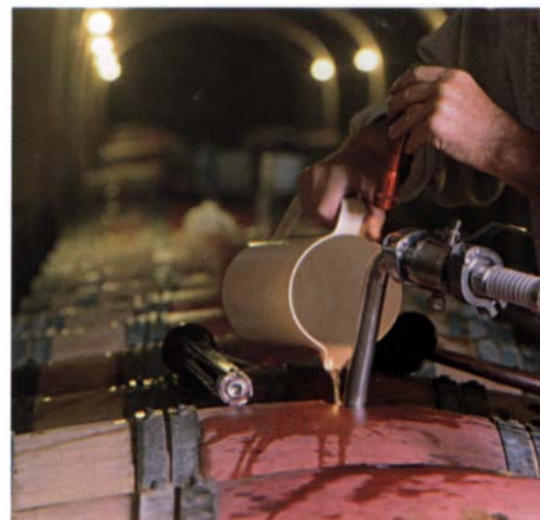
Sugar level, called brix, is measured by looking at a few drops of juice through a refractometer. A brix of 23° to 25° (depending on how the grapes look and taste) means it's time to pick the fruit.



Forman transfers Cabernet Sauvignon grapes from fermentation tank to crusher. After crushing, the juice returns to the fermenter for two weeks before being moved to oak barrels.

# From Vine to Wine

Like other types of farming, winemaking is a job where nature is boss. “Seventy-five percent of it is the grapes and the gift of a great site,” says Ric Forman. “Then it’s up to the winemaker not to blow it.” Forman began his career more than thirty years ago, running a large vineyard that produced 75,000 cases a year. But early on, a trip to France turned him on to artisan techniques, and the introduction was a revelation. Eventually he pared down and went out on his own, now making just 4,500 cases a year at Forman Vineyards, his tiny estate winery in the Napa Valley. Of being small-scale, Forman says, “You can observe and adjust—you can feel, smell, and taste what’s happening, so nothing gets ahead of you.” He adds, “Some people might get weird working alone, I guess. But this way, I know it gets done right.”

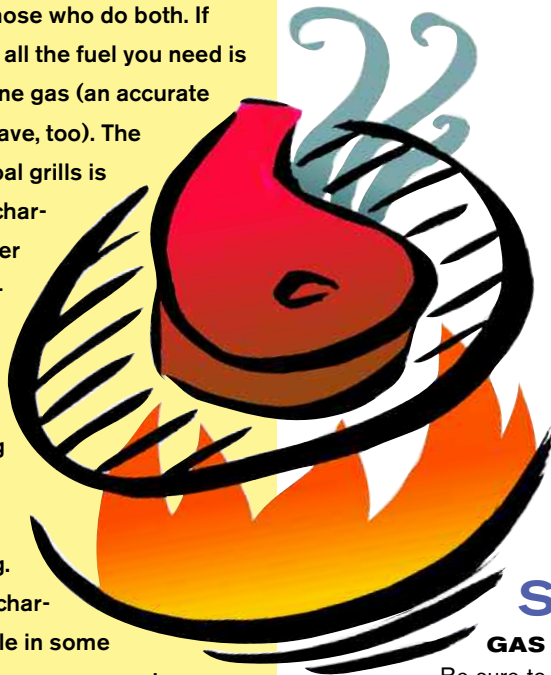


After crushing, fermenting, and transferring to oak barrels, Forman clarifies his red wine with a traditional egg-white fining. Beaten whites are stirred into each barrel. Particles cling to the whites, which settle to the bottom of the barrel, softening the wine’s tannins and sweeping it clear. Months later, Forman pours a brilliant, unclouded wine off the sunken lees and lets it continue aging. While bigger wineries fine with elaborate equipment, ferrying the wine between barrels and tanks, Forman prefers to fine by hand in the barrel so “the wine is less meddled with,” resulting in richer flavors.

# fine COOKING Grilling Guide

## Choosing your fuel

More Americans (about 60%) are now cooking on gas grills than on charcoal, though there are those who do both. If you're a gas griller, all the fuel you need is a full tank of propane gas (an accurate gauge is good to have, too). The best fuel for charcoal grills is natural hardwood charcoal. It burns cleaner and hotter than briquettes (which often contain fillers) and has the added benefit of providing that wonderful campfire aroma while you're grilling. Natural hardwood charcoal is now available in some grocery stores and many gourmet specialty stores, as well as by mail (see Sources, p. 80). If you can only find briquettes, try to use those labeled "hardwood" briquettes, and steer away from the self-lighting kind, which are saturated with petroleum. You can also try grilling over real hardwood like oak or hickory—if you've got plenty of time on your hands (the logs need 1 to 2 hours to burn down to coals) and if you don't mind a fire that may be somewhat inconsistent.



If you're like most Americans, you can't resist the lure of cooking outdoors. You enjoy improving your skill at the grill, and you're always on the lookout for new dishes to add to your repertoire. To help you in your fiery pursuits, we offer loads of tips and advice on building your fire, choosing the most useful equipment, and grilling with indirect heat, as well as a comprehensive guide to preparing and cooking more than 40 foods on the grill.

## Starting your fire

### GAS GRILL

Be sure to give a gas grill plenty of **preheating time** so that the grill and the grates are really hot when you start cooking. Unless you have a super-powerful gas grill (burners with lots of Btu), you'll want to crank all the burners up to the highest setting to heat (you can always adjust one or more burners later). Use an oven thermometer to determine how hot your grill is (keeping the cover down, of course).

### CHARCOAL GRILL

The easiest way to start a charcoal fire is with a **chimney starter**. Load the top of the metal canister with charcoal, stuff newspaper in the bottom, and light the paper with a match. Updraft spreads the fire from the paper to the charcoal, and in about 30 minutes, all your coals are glowing. Turn the starter over (beware: the handle will be hot) to dump out the coals. Spread them evenly or bank them to one side of the grill, depending on the type of grilling you're doing (see "Direct and indirect grilling," at far right). Wait for the coals to cool to the desired temperature (see "Hand test," at far left).

## Tips for successful grilling

♦ **Make sure your grill is really clean before cooking.** For best flavor and to prevent sticking, scrub the grate with a wire brush after it's heated. If you don't have a brush, use tongs to rub an old rag or even crumpled up foil over the grate.

♦ **Gather your tools and do all your prep in advance.** You don't want to leave your steak unattended or miss the window of a perfect-temperature fire because you're looking for your tongs or slicing a mountain of vegetables.

♦ **Be patient.** Don't start grilling until your coals are ready or your gas grill is heated.

♦ **Brush on barbecue sauces and sweet glazes toward the end of cooking.** They'll burn if they're put on early in the grilling.

♦ **Pay attention.** Unless you're cooking with indirect heat, you'll have the best results if you keep a close eye on how fast your food is cooking.



## Really useful grilling tools

Though we're wary of many grilling gadgets, the following tools are essential:

### ♦ A good pair of long-handled spring-loaded tongs

—for handling everything. You don't need that giant fork that comes with a "barbecue set." All it does is poke holes in meat and let precious juices escape. If you can't part with it, use it (along with your tongs) as a lever, not a spear, to move large roasts or to redistribute coals.

### ♦ A large spatula or two

—handy for turning whole fish, flipping burgers or handling delicate vegetables.

### ♦ Hot pads or dish-towels.

Dedicate one or two potholders just to the grill, as they tend to get beaten up. Mitts can be bulky, but folded dishtowels work well as potholders. Have an extra towel on hand for clean-up.

### ♦ A long-handled pastry brush.

Essential for dabbing on sauces and glazes, and for brushing oil on vegetables and kebabs.

### ♦ Bamboo skewers.

Stock up on these and soak them for 30 minutes before using. Unlike metal skewers, they don't poke huge holes in food. You can buy them in bulk and in several sizes, so you can assemble a lot of kebabs ahead of time for a party.

### ♦ A wire-bristled brush

—for cleaning the grill grate. Scrub build-up off the grate (easiest while it's still warm) before using it again to avoid transferring flavors and charred bits onto your next meal.

### ♦ A table or other launching and landing surface.

If your grill doesn't have an adjacent shelf, you'll need a small table or some other place

to stage food for the grill (especially if you're more than a few steps from the kitchen). This is also a good place to stack a few clean plates and platters for food coming off the grill since you don't want to mix cooked meat with raw juices.

### ♦ Aluminum foil and foil drip pans.

Use foil to fashion makeshift trays (poke holes in the bottom) for small vegetables that might fall through the grate or to make grilling tomatoes easier. Use foil to wrap vegetables like onions and eggplant that may be well done on the outside but not quite cooked on the inside when they come off the grill (they'll finish cooking in the foil). Use foil pans to catch juices from roasts on the grill.

### ♦ An instant-read thermometer and an oven thermometer

—to check on foods grilled slowly and indirectly.

## Direct & indirect grilling

When building a charcoal fire, you can arrange the coals so that one part of the fire is hotter than the other: all you have to do is bank most of the hot coals to one side of the grill or on the outer edges of the grill, in effect creating a two-level fire. This gives you the option of **direct grilling** (putting the food right over the coals) or **indirect grilling** (putting the food on the cooler side of the grill, farthest from the hot coals, and covering the grill to create an oven-like atmosphere). You can create this effect on a gas grill by keeping one or more burners at medium-high heat and one at low heat. By building a two-level fire, you have the flexibility to move food around if it's cooking too quickly or too slowly. Even hamburgers, chicken breasts, and steaks—which should be grilled quickly over direct heat to stay juicy—can benefit from resting on a cooler part of the grill.

**Some foods, like large roasts and whole chickens and turkeys, must be cooked entirely with indirect heat** so that they don't burn on the outside before they're fully cooked inside. On a charcoal grill, they need a large spot on the grill grate that isn't directly over the coals, so put a large foil pan in the center of the bottom of the grill and arrange the coals around it (the pan also catches dripping juices from the roast). You can also buy metal brackets that hold the coals to the sides of the grill. On a gas grill, put the roast on a rack inside a foil pan and put the pan directly on the grate.

**Indirect grilling is also the best method for cooking tougher cuts like ribs that benefit from long, slow cooking.** This is also the time to add wood chips or chunks to your fire if you want additional smoky flavor. For the most effective smoking, soak chips first and contain them in a heatproof tin (or small cast iron pan). Be sure not to put loose (uncontained) chips into a gas grill, as they can clog the gas pipe. You can use wood chips when grilling directly, too, although the food usually isn't on the fire long enough to absorb the smoky aroma.

## Tips

### ♦ Don't crowd the grill.

Leave enough room around each piece of food for air to circulate so that the food sears properly and so that your fire has the air it needs to fuel it.

### ♦ Don't move the food too often.

It's tempting to check on something by turning it over, but if you can be patient and let the food sit long enough to really sear, you won't have as many sticking problems. With practice, you can learn to turn most foods only once.

### ♦ Learn to manage flare-ups without a squirt bottle.

You can prevent flare-ups by letting excess marinade or oil drain or drip off before putting food on the fire. When flare-ups do happen, move food to a cooler spot on the grill or temporarily cut off the air to the grill by covering it or shutting the air vents.

### ♦ Stow a supply of seasonings near the grill

so you'll always have them on hand, for example, a salt shaker, a pepper grinder, and a bottle or spray bottle of olive oil.





Pork tenderloin

Leave whole or butterfly; coat generously with spice or herb rub. Or marinate in a soy- or citrus-based marinade for 2 to 12 hours; drain well and season with salt and pepper.	Grill whole tenderloin directly over medium-hot coals, turning 2 to 3 times to sear all sides; move to indirect heat to finish. Grill butterflied tenderloin directly over medium-hot coals.	Grill whole tenderloin 2 to 3 min. on all sides over direct heat; move to indirect heat and cover grill for 6 to 8 min. Grill butterflied tenderloin 4 to 5 min. per side.
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Pork back ribs or spareribs

Coat generously with spice rub; prepare basting sauce.	Grill indirectly with low heat until very tender: back ribs, 1½ to 2 hours; spareribs, 3 to 5 hours. Baste with sauce only during last 20 to 30 min.	Grill 1½ to 5 hours total time with indirect heat; grill covered. Optional: parcook ribs first by baking (covered, with a little water in the pan) in the oven at 350°F for 1 hour; reduce grilling time.
--	--	---

Pork kebabs (loin or sirloin)

Cut meat into 1½- to 2-inch cubes. Coat generously with a spice rub or salt, pepper, and a little oil. Or marinate for 2 to 12 hours; drain well and season.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning 2 to 3 times or as necessary.	Grill 2 to 3 min. on each side (8 to 12 min. total).
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Sausages

Uncooked: parboil for 6 min. if desired; coat lightly with oil. Fully cooked: coat lightly with oil.	Grill all sausages over medium-hot coals until browned all over; to finish cooking fresh sausages that weren't parboiled, move to indirect heat, cover grill.	Grill directly for 8 to 10 min. total; move to indirect heat if necessary (cover grill) for 8 to 10 min.
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Lamb

Loin lamb chops

Choose thick (1½- to 2-inch) chops. Marinate for 2 to 12 hours in wine marinade. Or coat generously with a spice or herb rub or salt, pepper, and a little oil.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals.	Grill 6 to 7 min. on one side; turn and grill 4 to 5 min. on other side for medium rare.
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Rib lamb chops

Coat generously with a spice rub or salt, pepper, and a little olive oil.	Grill directly over hot coals.	Grill 3 min. per side for medium rare.
---	--------------------------------	--

Butterflied leg of lamb

Trim excess fat; separate thicker loin from the rest of the meat if desired; marinate overnight in wine or yogurt marinade; drain well and season with a rub or salt, pepper, and a little oil.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals and sear all sides; move loin to indirect heat to finish cooking.	Grill directly 6 to 8 min. per side; move loin to indirect heat (cover grill) for 5 to 10 min. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer.
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Boneless leg of lamb (rolled and tied)

Spread purée of fresh herbs, olive oil, and garlic on interior of lamb if rolling yourself; season exterior generously with salt, pepper, and oil.	Grill indirectly (on cooler side of grill) with a medium-hot fire; cover grill; rotate occasionally so that a different side is closest to heat.	Grill 14 to 15 min. per lb. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer.
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Lamb kebabs (sirloin or leg meat)

Cut into 2-inch cubes, marinate for 2 to 12 hours; drain well and season with a spice rub or salt and pepper; thread on two skewers for easier turning.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning 2 to 3 times as necessary.	Grill 2 to 3 min. on all sides (8 to 12 min. total) for medium rare.
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Marinades

**Method:** Whisk together all ingredients in a small bowl. Combine the marinade and meat in a zip-top bag and refrigerate, turning occasionally. As a general rule, marinate shrimp, scallops, and fish for 30 to 40 min., chicken, beef, pork and lamb for at least 1 hour and up to 12 hours or overnight. Don't let meat sit in a yogurt marinade for more than 12 hours, as it will turn mushy.

Soy, Ginger & Garlic Marinade

*Yields ½ cup, enough for 12 oz. meat.*

- 2 Tbs. sugar
- 3 Tbs. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. *sake* or rice wine
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 5 scallions (white part only), finely minced (about 3 Tbs.)
- 2 tsp. finely chopped fresh ginger
- 2 tsp. toasted sesame oil

Lime, Ginger & Yogurt Marinade

*Yields 1 cup, enough for 1½ to 2 lb. meat.*

- 2-inch piece ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¾ cup plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 Tbs. fresh lime juice

Ginger-Citrus Marinade

*Yields 1¼ cups, enough for 1 lb. meat or fish.*

- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 small lemon, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbs. honey
- 2-inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- Grated zest of 1 lime
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ⅓ cup canola or other vegetable oil

Balsamic & Herb Marinade

*Yields a scant 1 cup, enough for 1½ lb. meat.*

- 3 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 1½ Tbs. roasted garlic purée (or 1 Tbs. minced fresh garlic)
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh sage or fresh oregano
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Fresh Herb, Lemon & Mustard Marinade

*Yields 1 cup, enough for 1½ lb. meat or fish.*

- 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped mixed fresh herbs (such as rosemary, thyme, and flat-leaf parsley)
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs. Dijon mustard
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

# Poultry

## Boneless chicken breasts or thighs

Remove tenderloin from breast for even cooking. Unroll thighs and remove excess fat. Coat generously with a spice or herb rub. Or marinate for 1 to 12 hours; drain well and season with salt and pepper.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning once.	Grill breasts 5 to 6 min. per side. Grill thighs 4 to 5 min. per side.
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## Chicken kebabs

Cut boneless breast or thigh meat into 2-inch pieces; marinate for 1 hour or as long as overnight; drain well; season with a spice rub or salt, pepper, and a little oil; thread on two parallel skewers for easier turning (fold pieces in half if necessary).	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning 2 to 3 times as necessary.	Grill 2 to 3 min. on all sides (8 to 12 min. total).
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## Bone-in chicken pieces

Coat generously with a spice rub; prepare sauce for basting. Or marinate 2 hours or as long as overnight; drain well and season with salt and pepper.	Grill indirectly (on cooler side of grill) with a low or medium fire. Or grill directly over medium-hot coals (skin side down); turn over and move to indirect heat to finish.	Grill indirectly for 2½ to 3 hours with low heat or 1 to 1½ hours with medium heat. Or grill directly, 5 to 7 min. to sear skin; turn over and move to indirect heat for 25 to 35 min. Baste with sauce, if using, only during last 10 to 15 min.
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## Chicken halves or butterflied Cornish game hens

Season with a spice or herb rub or marinate for 2 hours or as long as overnight; drain well and season with salt and pepper.	Grill skin side down (weight with foil-wrapped bricks for even cooking) directly over medium-hot coals. Turn and move to indirect heat to finish.	Grill 5 to 7 min. over direct heat to sear skin well; turn over and finish with indirect heat for 30 to 40 min. (chicken halves) or 18 to 22 min. (butterflied hens).
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## Whole chicken or Cornish game hens

Rub generously with a spice rub or marinate 2 hours or as long as overnight; drain well and coat generously with salt and pepper or a spice rub.	Grill indirectly with a medium fire on coolest part of grill over a foil drip pan (use a cone-shaped stand to hold the bird, if available).	Grill chicken about 18 min. per lb. (about 1 hour, 15 min. for a 4-lb. chicken). Grill game hens 40 to 45 min. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer.
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## Whole turkey

Coat generously with a spice or herb rub and olive oil, or marinate turkey in a salt and sugar brine for 2 to 3 days; drain well and coat with a spice rub or salt, pepper, and a little oil.	Grill indirectly with a medium-hot fire. Put the turkey in the center of the grill over a drip pan. Add coals as necessary to maintain consistent heat.	Grill about 18 min. per lb. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer.
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## Turkey burger

Hand-shape patties (no more than ¾-inch thick), season well with salt and pepper, and brush with oil.	Grill directly over medium coals with grill covered.	Grill 6 to 8 min. on each side, or until nicely browned; move to indirect heat to finish if necessary. Check doneness with an instant-read thermometer.
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# Shellfish

## Shrimp

Coat generously with a spice or herb rub; or marinate for 30 min., drain well, and season with salt and pepper. Skewer smaller shrimp (use two parallel skewers for easier turning); large shrimp can be cooked directly on grill grate or on an enameled grill rack.	Grill directly over hot coals, turning skewers or individual shrimp only once.	Grill small shrimp 2 min. per side, or turn when edges turn pink. Cook larger shrimp 3 to 4 min. per side.
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## Sea scallops

Rub with a spice or fresh herb rub; or marinate for 30 min., drain well, and season with salt and pepper. Thread on two parallel skewers for easier turning.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals on preheated enameled grill rack or directly on the grill grate, turning once.	Grill 4 to 6 min. per side, depending on size. Grill small bay scallops in a preheated enameled grilling basket, stirring frequently.
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## Hard-shell clams, mussels, oysters

Scrub thoroughly. Prepare dipping sauce or melt butter.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals on grill grate or on a shellfish grate.	Grill until shells just open, 3 to 6 min.; don't wait until they open very wide or they'll overcook. Use tongs to finish prying shells open.
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## Lobster

Split open a live 1½- to 2-lb. lobster with a chef's knife, head section first, followed by the tail. Remove the head sac and intestinal tract. Crack the claws. Brush the shell and exposed meat with melted butter and oil.	Grill the halves, shell side down, directly over medium coals, covering with a metal pie pan or small roasting pan to create an oven-like atmosphere.	Grill 8 to 12 min. (depending on size of lobster), basting with butter or oil twice, until the tail meat is creamy white.
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# Spice & herb rubs

**Method:** Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Store dry spice rubs in the pantry for two to three weeks. Store rubs with fresh ingredients in the refrigerator for up to two days. Apply rubs just before grilling, or for more flavor, rub the mix into the meat and refrigerate for several hours before grilling.

## Tex-Mex Rub for Steak or Chicken

*Yields 2 Tbs., enough for 12 oz. meat.*

½ tsp. chili powder  
1½ tsp. cumin seeds, toasted and ground  
1½ tsp. minced garlic  
¾ tsp. salt  
1½ tsp. chopped fresh oregano  
⅛ tsp. cayenne  
1 Tbs. vegetable oil

## Dry Rub for Ribs

*Yields 1½ cups, enough for 4 to 5 slabs spareribs or 8 to 10 slabs back ribs.*

¼ cup packed light brown sugar (spread on a baking sheet to dry for an hour or two)  
¼ cup sugar  
¼ cup seasoned salt  
2 Tbs. garlic salt  
1 Tbs. onion salt  
1½ tsp. celery salt  
¼ cup sweet Hungarian paprika  
1 Tbs. chili powder  
1 Tbs. freshly ground pepper  
1½ tsp. rubbed dried sage  
½ tsp. ground allspice  
¼ tsp. cayenne  
Pinch ground cloves

## Curry-Mint Rub for Shrimp

*Yields ⅓ cup, enough for 1½ lb. shrimp.*

1½ Tbs. coriander seeds, toasted and ground  
3 Tbs. finely chopped fresh mint  
¾ tsp. curry powder  
2 small cloves garlic, minced  
1 tsp. ground ginger  
1 tsp. cracked black peppercorns  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 Tbs. vegetable oil

## Fresh Herb, Garlic & Lemon Rub

Combine in blender or small food processor. *Yields ½ cup, enough for 2 to 3 lb. meat.*

½ cup lightly packed flat-leaf parsley or basil leaves  
2 Tbs. fresh rosemary leaves  
Grated zest of 1 lemon  
4 cloves garlic  
2 Tbs. cracked black peppercorns  
2 Tbs. lightly crushed mustard seeds  
2 tsp. salt  
2 Tbs. olive oil

# Barbecue & basting sauces

**Method:** Brush on these sauces toward the end of grilling.

## Kansas City Style Barbecue Sauce

*Yields 2¼ cups, enough for 10 to 12 lb. of meat.*

⅓ cup packed dark brown sugar  
¼ cup white vinegar, more to taste  
2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce  
1 Tbs. prepared yellow mustard  
1 Tbs. chili powder  
1½ tsp. freshly ground pepper  
½ tsp. ground ginger  
½ tsp. ground allspice  
¼ tsp. cayenne  
⅛ tsp. ground mace  
2 Tbs. honey  
2 cups tomato ketchup

In a large, deep saucepan, combine all the ingredients. Set over medium heat, stirring well to dissolve the spices. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 30 min., stirring occasionally. Watch carefully, as the sauce tends to spatter.

## Soy-Honey-Sesame Glaze

*Yields ¾ cup, enough for 3 to 5 lb. of meat.*

½ cup soy sauce  
¼ cup *sake* or rice wine  
¼ cup honey  
1 Tbs. minced fresh ginger  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tsp. dry mustard  
2 Tbs. toasted sesame oil

In a small saucepan, combine all the ingredients. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let simmer until reduced to a thick glaze.



# Fish

Preparation	Grilling technique	Cooking time
<b>Whole small fish (trout, mackerel)</b>		
Fill cavity with herbs, lemon slices, or other seasonings. Brush skin with oil. Make sure grate is very clean and oil it lightly.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning only once with two spatulas.	Grill 5 to 7 min. on each side.
<b>Whole medium to large fish (snapper, salmon)</b>		
Stuff cavity with herbs, garlic, onions, or other seasonings. Tie with butcher twine to keep stuffing in. Score skin with a paring knife and brush skin with oil. Make sure grate is very clean and oil it lightly.	Grill fish directly over medium coals, turning once with two large spatulas.	Grill 10 to 12 min. on each side for medium fish, 20 min. per side for large fish. If fire seems too hot, reduce direct cooking time and gently move fish to indirect heat to finish cooking for 10 to 15 min. (cover grill).
<b>Fish steaks (salmon, halibut)</b>		
Marinate for 30 min., coat with a spice or herb rub, or season with salt and pepper and brush lightly with mayonnaise (to help prevent sticking).	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning once.	Grill 5 to 7 min. per side.
<b>Fish fillets, thin (sole, catfish)</b>		
Cover fish with lemon slices and herbs and wrap in foil. Or season lightly with salt, pepper, and olive oil.	Grill foil package directly over medium-hot coals, turning once. Or oil and preheat an enameled grilling rack, slide fillets onto it, and cover grill (do not turn).	Grill foil package 5 min. on each side. Grill fillets on rack 8 to 10 min. total.
<b>Fish fillets, thick (swordfish, mahi-mahi)</b>		
Marinate for 30 min. or coat with a spice or herb rub or salt and pepper. Or lightly coat with mayonnaise.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning once.	Grill 5 to 7 min. per side.

# Vegetables

<b>Artichokes</b>		
Trim whole and baby artichokes and cut in quarters (in half if small). Parboil just until tender; cool and toss with oil, herbs, and salt.	Grill directly over medium coals, cut side up first, turning once; keep grill covered.	Grill 5 to 7 min. on each side until nicely browned.
<b>Asparagus</b>		
Trim tough stems; coat with olive oil and salt.	Grill directly over medium coals, turning frequently.	Grill 5 to 8 min. total, until nicely browned. Roll over every 1 to 2 min. to brown evenly.
<b>Bell peppers</b>		
Leave whole or halve and seed. Or stem, seed, and cut into chunks to thread on two parallel skewers; coat with oil, salt, and fresh herbs.	Grill whole peppers directly over medium-hot or hot coals until charred. Grill halves and skewers directly over medium-hot coals until soft and slightly charred.	Grill whole peppers 3 to 5 min. on all sides until black. Grill halves, skin side up, 5 to 8 min; skin side down 4 to 5 min. Grill skewers 2 to 3 min. on all sides. Move to indirect heat if not soft.
<b>Corn</b>		
Shuck corn, rub with butter and salt, wrap in aluminum foil; or leave corn in the husk and remove just a few outer layers.	Grill corn in foil directly over medium coals, turning as necessary. Grill corn in husk over hot coals, turning frequently.	Grill corn in foil 20 min., turning once. Grill corn in husks 8 to 10 min., until charred all over.
<b>Eggplant</b>		
Cut small or Japanese eggplant in half lengthwise; cut bigger eggplant in ¾-inch slices on the bias; brush generously with oil.	Grill directly over medium coals, turning once.	Grill 5 to 6 min. per side, until nicely browned; stack on cooler side of grill to let them steam to finish cooking.
<b>Mushrooms</b>		
Wipe clean, remove stems, leave whole, toss well with olive oil and lemon juice or vinegar; sprinkle with salt or soy sauce; thread smaller mushrooms on skewers.	Grill large mushrooms and skewers directly over medium-hot coals; turn portabellas once, skewers 2 to 3 times.	Grill portabellas 5 min. per side, skewers 2 to 3 min. per side, until nicely browned.
<b>Red or yellow onions</b>		
Slice large onions ½-inch thick, hold together with 1 or 2 bamboo skewers for easier turning, and brush with olive oil. Or cut into chunks and toss with oil and herbs; skewer or heat an enameled grill basket.	Grill slices or skewers directly over medium-hot coals. Stir-fry chunks in grill basket.	Grill 5 to 7 min. per side, until soft, lightly charred, and translucent. If charring too fast, move to indirect heat and stack (or wrap in foil) to finish.
<b>Potatoes</b>		
Quarter or halve small red or yellow potatoes; cut Idahos lengthwise into “fries”; parboil if desired; toss with olive oil, salt, and fresh rosemary; a mixture of mayonnaise and Dijon; or olive oil and a spice rub.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals; move to indirect heat (with grill covered) to finish cooking if not parboiled.	Grill 4 to 5 min. per side, until well browned all over; cook with indirect heat 6 to 8 min. to finish if not parboiled.
<b>Tomatoes</b>		
Choose plum tomatoes for best results; cut in half, sprinkle with oil, salt, and a bit of balsamic vinegar; or heat an enameled grill rack.	Grill directly over medium coals, skin side down; when skin is well-browned, turn over and lightly char cut side.	Grill 6 to 8 min. on skin side; turn and grill cut side down 2 to 3 min. until charred and slightly softened but not collapsed.
<b>Zucchini and summer squash</b>		
Cut small squash in half lengthwise, cut larger squash into ¾-inch slices on the bias; toss with oil, herbs, and salt.	Grill directly over medium-hot coals, turning once.	Grill 4 to 5 min. per side, until lightly charred outside and tender inside.

## How hot is your fire? Use the “hand test”

To test the heat of your fire, hold your outstretched palm an inch or two above the grill grate. The length of time you can stand the heat tells you how hot the grill is. You can use this test on gas grills as well as charcoal grills.

TIME HAND CAN BE HELD OVER GRILL	GRILL HEAT	TEMPERATURE RANGE (IN °F)
Less than 1 second	very hot	over 600°
1 to 2 seconds	hot	400° to 500°
3 to 4 seconds	medium	350° to 375°
5 to 7 seconds	medium low	325° to 350°
You can also use visual clues to tell how hot your charcoal fire is. When the coals are all bright red and still flaming, they’re very hot—too hot for most grilling. The fire will be a little cooler when the coals are red but covered with a light ash. When the fire is medium hot, the coals will be thickly covered with a yellowish ash. For best results, keep the grilling grate about 4 inches above the coals.		

## Grill a thin, crisp pizza

This pizza has a thin, crisp, slightly chewy crust with a light smattering of toppings and a delicious smoky flavor. *Every 6 oz. of dough makes one 10- to 12-inch pizza, enough for one person as a main course, or two to three as a starter.*

**Pizza dough (store-bought or homemade)**  
**Extra-virgin olive oil or a favorite herb or spicy oil (ideally in a bottle with a pouring spout)**  
**A mix of finely grated Parmesan and pecorino romano (about ¼ cup per pizza)**  
**A mix of roughly chopped fresh herbs, such as rosemary, thyme, mint, basil, and parsley**  
**Prepared toppings (see below)**

Divide the dough into 6-oz. pieces. Put them on an oiled baking sheet and turn to coat well with oil. Cover with plastic and let rise at room temperature until almost doubled in size, 3 to 4 hours (or let rise according to your recipe directions). Light a charcoal grill, banking your coals to one side to create hotter and cooler sides of the grill. Set up a small table with your toppings, the dough, a clean damp dishtowel, olive oil, tongs, a large baking sheet, a cutting board, and a knife. When the coals are a little cooler than medium (you can hold your hand over the grate about 5 seconds), you’re ready to start. **To grill the pizza—**Oil your fingertips and the back of the baking sheet. Stretch one piece of dough on the sheet to an even thickness between ⅛ and ¼ inch. Try not to create any holes. Aim for a rectangle, but any shape will do. Lift two corners of the dough and drape it gently onto the grill grate directly over the hottest part of the grill.

When the dough begins to puff up all over and become slightly firm (about 1 min.), check the bottom with your tongs. It should be browned and have nice grill marks. (If it’s burnt after just 1 min., the fire is too hot; let it die down.) Move the dough around to cook the bottom evenly. Pull the dough to the cooler side of the grill and flip it over. Add the grated cheese and toppings of your choice and drizzle a little oil over all. Return the pizza to the hot side of the grill, but move it around constantly to evenly brown the bottom and let the cheese melt and the toppings warm. Scatter some chopped fresh herbs on the pizza, remove it from the grill, cut it up, and serve.

### Toppings

Keep the toppings light for this delicate pizza. In addition to the cheese and herbs above, choose one or more of the following.

- Thinly sliced tomatoes
- Thinly sliced fresh mozzarella
- Whole small fresh basil leaves
- Grated Fontina or Gruyère
- Caramelized thinly sliced onions
- Thinly sliced prosciutto
- Roasted garlic
- Sliced oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
- Dollops of fresh goat cheese
- Black or green olive tapenade
- Fresh tomato sauce (small spoonfuls)
- Toasted pine nuts